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[RETRIBUTION.]

## EVANDER; OR, A MAN'S PUNISHMENT.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"Heart's Content," "Tempting Fortune," &c., &c.

### CHAPTER VI.

She look'd; but all  
Suffused with blushes—neither self-possessed  
Nor startled, but betwixt this mood and that,  
Divided in a graceful quiet—paused,  
And dropt the branch she held.

A word could bring the colour to my cheek;  
A thought would fill my eyes with happy dew;  
Love trembled life within me. *Tennyson.*

"I EXPERIENCE considerable difficulty, Miss St. Aubyn, in commencing," said Frederick Mordaunt, "because I fear you will attribute what I am about to say to an unworthy feeling of jealousy, at once contemptible and beneath the notice of a liberal-minded man; but I do hope you will, on reflection, acquit me of any such motive, when I assure you, on my word as a gentleman, that I have ceased to hope that you will be anything more to me in the years to come than a sincere friend. I have schooled my stubborn heart to love you as a sister, and it is to preserve your peace and happiness that I have determined to warn you of a danger which I have discovered, and which now menaces you."

He had cast down his eyes as he began to speak, growing bolder as he proceeded. He knew that he was doing right, and his conscience approved his course, so that he gained sufficient courage to look steadily at Lily, and watch the effect of his words upon her expressive countenance.

She grew pale and red by turns. Her prophetic soul told her that it was of Sir Charles Evander that he was going to speak, and she felt both angry at his presumption, and curious to know what he might have to say against him.

"You have given me permission to speak to you," continued Mr. Mordaunt, "and at the risk of offend-

ing, I must ask you if you love Sir Charles Evander?"

The glowing tints of the setting sun, visible through the branches of the ancient trees which adorned the gardens, were not more striking than the vivid flush which mantled Miss St. Aubyn's cheek at these words.

In a low voice she replied:

"I do love him. I have confessed to my mother that I love him passionately. He is more to me than in the innocence of my heart I once thought any human being could ever be."

Mr. Mordaunt heaved a deep sigh. If this admission of an absorbing passion had been made in his favour how happy he would have been.

"I presume," he went on, "that you hope some day to become his wife?"

"I do," she responded, in the same soft, subdued voice.

"Then you deceive yourself," said Frederick Mordaunt. "A few hours ago I heard your name mentioned slightly at a club. Evander expressed his contempt for matrimony, and gave his friends to understand that he found you very agreeable to pass the time with in the country, but that he had to pay the penalty in town of his indiscretion, as you were very difficult to shake off. Pardon this language. It is necessary to explain thoroughly the villany of this young man. You have written him letters which he has shown his friends, and you are already the laughing stock of most of the gentlemen who visit your mother."

The effect of this communication upon Miss St. Aubyn was marked and immediate.

Pressing her hands to her face, as if to stop some sudden throbbing in her forehead, or shut out some dreadful sight from her startled gaze, she stood like one in a profound reverie, until a sob broke from her, and seizing Mr. Mordaunt's hand in a convulsive grasp, she exclaimed:

"I have no reason to doubt the truth of what you have said. You are too much a gentleman to deceive me in order to serve a purpose of your own, which I must soon detect. If I am, as you say, Mr.

Mordaunt, the laughing-stock of a London club, I must have a protector. To whom can I turn in my hour of need, but to you? It is true that I have little claim upon your good nature. You did me the highest honour a man can do a woman. You asked me to be your wife, and I refused, because I could not control that wayward thing we call the heart. My affections were given to another. Yet I will put this still slumbering passion of yours to the test. I will ask you to revenge the insults that have been heaped upon me."

An expression of deep satisfaction overspread Mr. Mordaunt's countenance.

"I feel deeply grateful to you Miss St. Aubyn," he said, "for your preference and I accept the task with pleasure."

"You are good and kind," she answered, her voice trembling with a deep emotion. "I have neither a father or brother. The coward, perhaps, relied upon this fact; therefore, I call upon you to punish him."

"And I promise you that I will do it, though Sir Charles Evander is no coward. He is simply a bold, bad man, without heart or principle, a wicked wretch who should not be allowed to encumber the earth. He must marry you, or—"

He broke off abruptly. Lily St. Aubyn questioned him with her eyes.

"He must die!" he continued, in a solemn voice which sounded like that of prophecy.

Lily shook him convulsively by the hand, and begged that he would leave her. The brougham was at the entrance to the garden, so that she could return home alone. With compassion mingled with love beaming from his face Frederick Mordaunt took leave of her, after having effectually destroyed her peace of mind, and roused her from the pleasant dream in which she had been indulging for so many months.

He felt sincerely grieved for her, and wished that she would fly to him for comfort and affection in her hour of need, as well as championship; but it was useless to think of gaining her love. Her heart was Evander's. Her esteem and friendship Mordaunt could rely upon, and he tried to make that content him, though he failed miserably in the effort.

Making inquiries of some friends he met, he discovered that Sir Charles Evander would be at the opera in the evening. He was a constant supporter of the drama and opera, and Mordaunt determined to seek him in his box, ask him what were his intentions with regard to Miss St. Aubyn, and if he found them unsatisfactory challenge him to fight a duel on the Continent.

Duels with swords were becoming quite fashionable in France under the second empire, and he had little doubt that Evander would accept his challenge. He looked upon him as a monster. In the first place he was the destroyer of Lady Carisbrook's home and happiness, and the unquestionable murderer of her husband, who in obedience to the cruel terms of the lot duel would soon cease to live. Secondly he had treated Miss St. Aubyn infamously, and Mordaunt longed ardently to let him know that the heart of a young lady could not be trifled with at the pleasure of a faithless man, at the scandal and number of whose vagrant amours all London was ringing.

It was with the utmost impatience that Frederick Mordaunt awaited the coming of night. He had a stall at Covent Garden, and, taking possession of it, looked eagerly towards Evander's box. It was empty, but at the end of the first act the door opened and Sir Charles entered, accompanied by an elderly gentleman, whom Mordaunt had no difficulty in recognising as Dr. Roy who had been one of the seconds in the lot duel.

Caring little for the opera, though the music was Donizetti's, and the singing more than usually enjoyable and entrancing, Mordaunt left his stall and made his way to the baronet's box at which he knocked, being almost instantly admitted.

Sir Charles extended his hand in a friendly manner, which Mordaunt took, but his touch was cold and lacked that energy and warmth which characterises the greeting given by friends.

"I want to ask you a few questions which I believe you will answer readily," Mordaunt began. "Shall I speak before your friend?"

"Certainly. Dr. Roy, since the affair with Carisbrook, has become my firm friend and ally. By all means consider him a confidential companion," returned Sir Charles, eyeing him curiously.

"How would you proceed if you were going to be married?"

"Either by the publishing of banns, or by special license. The latter is the course usually adopted by people in good society. Have you any intention of committing the folly of marrying?" said Evander.

"Not I, my dear fellow," replied Mordaunt; "it is yourself. I am informed that you are engaged to Miss St. Aubyn, and I was desirous of knowing in what manner you wished the ceremony to take place. Now that you have told me, I shall be happy to accompany you to-morrow to obtain the license."

Sir Charles Evander's face clouded over. He saw in a moment that Frederick Mordaunt was Lily's champion, and that he had purposely come to the opera to force him into a marriage, or to pick a quarrel with him on the ground of his refusal.

"I am very sorry, sir," he said, with frigid politeness, "that I am unable to enjoy your pleasure."

"I do not joke," exclaimed Mordaunt. "You have told this young lady to believe that you would marry her. If you refuse to fulfil your pledge, if you parade her name injudiciously at your club, if you show her private letters, which should by a gentleman be held sacred, you behave like a blackguard, and I tell you that you ought to be excluded from the society of those whom you have hitherto regarded as your equals."

"I perfectly understand the meaning of your language, and I should have thought that the affair in which you so recently assisted would have acted as a warning to you," said Evander, with a lowering brow.

"If you think to dispose of me in the same way you are greatly mistaken. It is too murderous for my liking," replied Mordaunt, with a provoking laugh.

"Have you anything better to suggest?"

"I believe so. Duelling is a recognised institution in France. I will proceed to-morrow to Paris, and await the arrival of any friend deputed by you to call upon me to arrange the preliminaries of a duel, which can take place near the Café de Madrid in the Boulogne wood."

"I have no objection whatever," replied Sir Charles Evander, smiling blandly. "In less than three days you shall hear from me, as I will follow you to the French capital, and shall select Dr. Roy as my friend on the occasion."

"That is sufficient," said Frederick Mordaunt, who gave Evander a supercilious nod, and left the box. The next morning he put his affairs in order,

and proceeded to Paris, where he stayed at the Hotel Bristol, having written down the address and forwarded it to Evander at his club.

He had not long to wait in suspense, for on the second day after his arrival, while sitting at breakfast, he was gratified by the appearance of Dr. Roy, who informed him that Sir Charles Evander would meet him on the coming morning at six o'clock, and had chosen to fight with swords.

Mordaunt expressed his pleasure at the arrangement, and requested the doctor to call upon Captain Vavasour, who was staying in the same hotel, and who had consented to act as his second. After a few more words the doctor declared himself satisfied, and took his departure.

The principals with their seconds were early at the place of meeting, the swords were measured and approved, and the duellists soon appeared in their shirts, with the sleeves tucked up to the elbows.

Mordaunt was a perfect master of the art of fencing, and usually a man calm and collected, but on this eventful morning whenever Dr. Roy fixed his gaze upon him he trembled violently.

Turning to Captain Vavasour he exclaimed: "When that strange little man looks at me I experience the most extraordinary sensation. Do you believe in the evil eye?"

"No," answered the captain. "That is a silly Italian superstition; you are nervous. Be careful and conquer the feeling, or your life is not worth five minutes' purchase. You will require all your skill and courage to vanquish Evander."

"I know it; but that man—there it is again! His eye seems to pierce to my very heart. It is singular, the weather is warm, but I am shivering and feel as cold as ice. It is that man's look that makes me cold."

Captain Vavasour would not credit this, and thinking that the longer the commencement of the fight was postponed the worse his friend's nervousness would become, he placed his hand and gave the signal, which Evander had for nearly a minute been waiting.

Their swords crossed, and they fenced with considerable skill for some time, without gaining any advantage, until Mr. Mordaunt's sword scratched his adversary's skin, and caused the blood to flow without inflicting any serious injury.

This slight wound created a smarting pain, which caused Evander to lose his temper, and he gave Mordaunt an opportunity of lunging straight at his breast, which was by his carelessness unprotected. At this moment when he was preparing to take advantage of the opportunity given him, his eye met that of Dr. Roy, which flashed and intensified in a remarkable manner. Mordaunt felt ill and nervous, and was unable to lift up his sword.

Evander recovered from his temporary neglect, and seeing the confusion of his adversary, shortened his weapon, and without the slightest hesitation, plunged it into his body, withdrawing it, covered with a crimson stain.

Mordaunt fell heavily to the ground, to all appearance dead, and did not utter a groan. Dr. Roy was by his side in an instant, making a medical examination, which lasted some time. He tied a bandage around the wound, and turning to Captain Vavasour, said:

"I should advise you to get your friend back to Paris with all possible speed. He is dangerously hurt in the lungs. There is internal hemorrhage, and if he does not have immediate and good attendance he will not live."

"Thank you," said Captain Vavasour, stiffly. "Come Sir Charles," continued the doctor. "Let us get back to England. Our business here is accomplished."

They bowed to Captain Vavasour and quitted the ground. He was too much occupied with and concerned for his poor friend to take any notice of them, and was glad when, with the driver's assistance, he got the body, which was heavy as a log, into the carriage which had brought them from Paris, and they were on the road to the capital, where a celebrated surgeon could be called in.

In a few hours Frederick Mordaunt was in his hotel, carefully looked after by Captain Vavasour, and attended by no less a person than the famous Nélaton himself, who expressed himself hopeful of a cure in time, though the case was, as Dr. Roy had truly said, one of a dangerous nature, requiring the utmost care and attention.

The affair got talked about though it did not appear in the newspapers. Miss St. Aubyn heard of it from a friend of Sir Charles Evander's, whom the latter commissioned especially to give her a detailed account of the duel, and the cause of quarrel.

This preyed upon her mind, and she became ill and melancholy, so much so that her mother and her friends became seriously alarmed as to the state of her health.

One evening Sir Charles Evander and Dr. Roy were dining at the club. It was about four days after the duel, and the doctor was dilating upon the share which he had taken in the affair of honour.

"You may believe me or not," he said; "but I assure you that I saved your life, my dear young friend, on that occasion, for I have the gift of the evil eye, and I used it in your behalf. You dropped your guard and were exposed to your antagonist's weapon. What saved you?"

"My quickness in recovering," answered Evander. "Not at all. I fixed my eye upon your opponent and he became as helpless as a little bird in the presence of the fascinating serpent before which he is powerless."

"I will not contradict you, but I am not convinced," answered Sir Charles, adding: "I think that is an evening paper near you. May I trouble you for it?"

"Certainly," replied Dr. Roy, handing it to him.

Sir Charles cast his eye over its pages, and presently exclaimed, with more excitement than he usually exhibited: "There are two items of news here, doctor, which I find extremely interesting. One records the extraordinary suicide of Lord Carisbrook, and the other announces the melancholy fact of the sudden madness of Miss Lily St. Aubyn, who is to be removed to a private asylum in Germany. When I think these two serious events are due to my skill and cleverness, I consider that I have something to be proud of. Shall I read you the details?"

"If you will. I shall be glad to hear them," said the doctor, who regarded the young man with a look of mingled curiosity and aversion. Truly he was more like a fiend than a human being.

Lord Carisbrook dead, Frederick Mordaunt probably dying, Lily St. Aubyn hopelessly insane and in a madhouse. These were the facts upon which he congratulated himself and felt proud!

But there was a punishment in store for him of which he did not dream—a punishment so signal, so terrible, so overwhelming and life-long, that the bare mention of it would cause the stoutest hearts to quail, and the most impatient wretch to fall upon his knees and cry aloud for mercy.

#### CHAPTER VII.

*Fitz-James was brave:—Though to his heart  
The life-blood thrilled with sudden start,  
He man'd himself with dauntless air,  
Returned the chief his haughty stare,  
His lock against a rock he bore,  
And firmly placed his foot before:  
"Come one, come all! this rock shall fly  
From its firm base as soon as I."*

*The Lady of the Lake.*

THE events which caused Sir Charles Evander such profound satisfaction made the public shudder with horror. It seemed inexplicable that a man in the position of Lord Carisbrook should take his own life, and that a young lady should become suddenly mad was still more extraordinary. Lady Evander believed her son to be the cause of these two dire calamities, and she treated him with extreme coldness. Dr. Roy went abroad, and the young man found himself at liberty to follow the bent of his vicious inclination with less restraint than before.

Mrs. St. Aubyn was greatly afflicted at her daughter's misfortune. She hoped that she was not permanently deranged, and was happy to find that the malady of which she was the victim yielded gradually before the curative skill of the doctor in whose hands she placed her. Mr. Mordaunt took up his residence in the same German town, and never ceased to make inquiries respecting her.

Lady Carisbrook, at the death of her husband, was terribly shocked. She did not know the cause of his suicide but her conscience somewhat accused her, and she retired to her country-house, spending her life in seclusion, and devoting her large fortune to the relief of her fellow creatures.

At the expiration of six months Miss St. Aubyn and her mother returned to England and selected as their abode a country residence which belonged to them in a wild and sparsely populated part of the north of England. The house had originally been a castle, but it had suffered somewhat in its architectural beauty by additions and improvements which rendered it a long, rambling residence. It was prettily situated, and the healthy air was expected to do wonders for Miss St. Aubyn. This residence was named Silver Pines and was but a few miles from a shooting box belonging to Sir Charles Evander, at which the young baronet was staying when the St. Aubyns returned from the continent. Their presence was, however, kept a secret, and as they went nowhere he did not hear of their proximity to his own abode.

It was a dull, heavy day in November, and the overhanging mists refused to be lifted by the sluggish breeze that prevailed.

Sir Charles shouldered his gun, and dispensing with the attendance of a keeper went out to kill



whatever might come in his way, and was, for a couple of hours, tolerably successful; he sat down on the moss-covered trunk of a fallen tree to recover from the fatigue which the heavy nature of the ground had occasioned him in walking, and involuntarily fell into a train of musing which was unpleasant to him. He thought of poor Lady Caribbrook and the still more unfortunate Miss St. Aubyn, and his heart reproached him for the cruel way in which he had treated a lovely and confiding young lady. Suddenly he was conscious of footsteps behind him, and looking up, beheld, to his great astonishment, three men; two of these wore black masks which hid their faces from view, the other did not attempt any disguise, and in him he recognised Frederick Mordaunt.

His countenance was so stern, so hard, and so implacable that instinctively Evander felt that some mischief was intended him, but the cool vindictive glance of the man he had done so much to make his enemy rendered him for the moment powerless. Mordaunt made a sign to the masked men, one of whom stepped forward and seized Sir Charles's gun, which rendered him powerless. Seeing the advantage which they thus gained over him he started to his feet as if to recover it. Mr. Mordaunt interposed his body and presented a pistol to his breast.

"What is the meaning of this conduct?" exclaimed Evander, angrily. "I should have thought, sir, that the last time we met I taught you a lesson that you would have done well to bear in mind, but since it seems that you are so forgetful I shall be very glad to do my work over again."

Mr. Mordaunt did not condescend to reply to this haughty and insolent speech. He made a second sign to his attendants, and they, obedient to the signal, threw themselves upon Sir Charles, who struggled ineffectually against their superior strength. In less than two minutes he was overpowered, his arms bound securely behind his back, his eyes bandaged with a large and thickly folded silk handkerchief, and himself rendered generally powerless.

The attack surprised him beyond measure, but he could obtain no satisfactory explanation, though he begged Mr. Mordaunt to let him know the cause of the outrage. The only answer he received was:

"You shall know all when the proper time comes; at present be content to obey and wait."

The spot at which he had been subjected to the indignity of being made a prisoner was near the high road, and he was compelled to walk across a field and go through a hedge, when he was assisted into a carriage which was in waiting.

It was a close carriage, the blinds were pulled down over the windows, so as to effectually shut out any impertinent observation from without, and Sir Charles Evander was made to sit down, with his face to the horses between his captors, who remained masked. Frederick Mordaunt placed himself on the front seat and watched every movement of Sir Charles with the restless eye of a lynx. The carriage proceeded at a quick pace along the somewhat hilly road, the only pauses that were made being occasioned by the inability of the horses to ascend or descend the steep hills at a gallop; a dense fog had arisen which enveloped everything in its funereal shadow, and at four o'clock it was effectually dark. At the expiration of two hours the carriage stopped, and Sir Charles Evander, who had remained obstinately silent, exclaimed:

"It is time that this farce should come to an end; pray be good enough to explain your intentions, Mr. Mordaunt."

"First of all," replied the young man, who was the champion of Lily St. Aubyn, "allow me to correct a false impression you have imbibed. This is not a farce. It is a tragedy."

Evander endeavoured to laugh, but the effect was a miserable failure, the sound died away in his throat with a sepulchral rattle, and he trembled convulsively.

"You will get out here," continued Mr. Mordaunt, "and if you utter a cry or a sound intended to challenge attention I give you my word of honour that I will put a ball led through your head. I hope you fully understand me."

"Perfectly," replied Evander; "and I trust the time will come when I shall have an opportunity of returning the favours you are conferring upon me."

He was assisted to alight, and a vague terror took possession of him. He was a brave though a bad man, and had been face to face with death more than once without his heart beating quicker; but he was now threatened with an unknown peril and his heart sank within him. He had cause, indeed, to fear the vengeance of Mordaunt if he was as he suspected the lover and the avenger of the wrongs of Miss St. Aubyn, whom he had so infamously treated.

He found himself in a circular vaulted apartment, which was lighted by a lamp suspended from the ceiling. A fourth man had led the way, holding a

torch in his hand, but for whose light there was now no occasion. The vault was comfortably furnished with chairs, carpet, sofa, and bedstead, and all that could be required for every-day use and sleeping accommodation. But as his eyes wandered farther, some objects calculated to strike terror and alarm into his breast were perceptible.

In one corner he remarked a pile of bricks, some mortar, and a mason's trowel.

In another was a brazier which contained some glowing charcoal.

Thirdly, on the table, stood a phial which contained a liquor of a green colour.

"Perhaps," said Sir Charles Evander, conjuring up the ghost of a smile, "you will have the kindness to explain the meaning of all that I see around me?"

"In a moment," responded Mr. Mordaunt. "But first of all we must proceed with certain formalities."

He made a sign to the fourth man, who put down his smoking torch, and approaching the brazier, inserted in the fire a small bar of iron such as is used for branding soldiers and marking convicts. He turned it round and round, and it speedily began to get warm.

A cold perspiration began to make itself apparent on Sir Charles Evander, who was at the same time the victim of a trembling he could not suppress. He regarded the brazier with a sort of stupor. If he was to be punished for what he had done, or rather for what he was the direct cause of, what was to be the nature of the punishment? The preparations he saw around him recalled the tortures of the middle ages, and made him fancy that those around him were sworn tormentors.

What was the fire for? What the bar of iron? What did the bricks, the mortar, and the trowel signify? What was the meaning of the green fluid on the table?

It was now that this cold, hard, cynical man, who made sport of all good feelings, and who trifled with the love and the honour of women, began to fear that the vengeance of heaven was about to overtake him. For the first time in his life he trembled visibly, and was afraid. There was a moment of terrible silence in the midst of this subterranean chamber and among these five men, one of whom was the judge, the other the condemned, and the remainder the executioners.

Again Mr. Mordaunt made a sign, and each of the three attendants moved in a separate direction; one seized the trowel and began to move it about in the mortar, the other took up the hot bar of iron with a pair of small tongs, while the third placed his hand upon the bottle, and poured some of its contents into a tumbler.

"Permit me, Sir Charles Evander," said Mr. Mordaunt, "to tell you why you are here and what you have done to deserve the exceptional measures that have been taken respecting you. More than six weeks ago I asked you at the opera what your intentions respecting Miss St. Aubyn were. You replied to me rudely and I challenged you to fight a duel and we met in France; you wounded me severely, but recovered. The effect of your conduct upon Miss St. Aubyn was to drive her into a madhouse, but thanks to care and attention and the best medical skill, she recovered her senses amidst the mountains of Saxony."

"That is, indeed, a happy circumstance," replied Sir Charles Evander, whose fondness for saying anything disagreeable was irrepressible. "I presume she loves you, and—"

Mr. Mordaunt sternly interrupted him, saying:

"Your position is sufficiently serious to suggest to you the propriety of not farther wounding the feelings that you have already outraged. Sir Charles," he added, "do you see that bar of iron which is round at one extremity and flat at the other?"

Evander had scarcely been able to take his eye off the little furnace, such fascination had this one amongst the other horrible preparations for him.

He nodded his head.

"You will observe," continued Frederick Mordaunt, "that this piece of iron, one end of which is now at white heat, has a word engraved or stamped upon it. Each letter of this word can be impressed, sinking in the flesh of your forehead, and it will remain there for ever. This word is 'assassin!' Eight letters! This is an epithet peculiarly applicable to you, because you were the murderer of Lord Caribbrook, the destroyer of his wife's happiness, and the actual cause of the madness and present unhappiness of Miss St. Aubyn."

Sir Charles Evander uttered a cry, and so great was his terror that he would have fallen had he not been near a wall, against which he was able to lean.

"It is useless for you to cry for assistance," Mr. Mordaunt went on. "We are a considerable distance below the earth's surface, and above is an ancient castle situated in the middle of a wood. No one can come to your help."

The audacity of Sir Charles utterly disappeared, and his prostration visibly increased.

"This bottle," continued Mordaunt, "which you see before you, contains vitriol, which will make the most handsome face an object of horror. If you are afraid of the red hot iron, and object to the world knowing that you are branded indelibly, you are at liberty to choose the vitriol. In either case your face will never more attract Lady Caribbrook or cause Miss St. Aubyn to regret that you did not keep your promise to her."

The young baronet listened, pale and trembling, while his forehead was bathed in a cold sweat of deadly terror.

"There are crimes, Sir Charles," Mr. Mordaunt resumed, "which our criminal laws do not touch. You could not be brought up before a magistrate for your duel by lot with Lord Caribbrook, and I am not aware of any law which will punish you for cruelly trifling with the affections of a young lady. I place myself in the chair of human justice, believing that I am doing a good work, and I am now going to punish you."

At this language Evander became angry and darted menacing glances at his enemy, but he was too proud as yet to demand mercy at his hands.

"If you object to the punishments I have mentioned," said Mr. Mordaunt, "there is yet another which I can offer to you. Those bricks and that mortar will shut off a corner in which you can be placed, and in this living tomb your days will soon be ended. I give you your choice—the hot iron, which will brand you as an assassin, the assassin not only of a man but of a woman's honour; the vitriol, which will render you hideous to the day of your death; and the bricks and mortar, which will enclose you in the narrow compass of a grave."

Sir Charles Evander could see by the sternness of Mordaunt's face and the reality of the preparations by which he was surrounded that he was not dreaming, or he would gladly have thought himself so, and overcome with terror he fell on his knees before his judge and begged abjectly for mercy, though he feared that none would be accorded him.

Mordaunt laughed with an ironical cadence. "What!" he cried, "do you ask for pardon and mercy? What mercy did you show to Lord Caribbrook? Had you any pity on Miss St. Aubyn?"

Evander remained upon his knees with his head bowed down, unable to utter a word, and in those few moments he suffered an age of agony. Mordaunt looked on with a calm complacency, as if he enjoyed his grief, and made no further reply to his impassioned appeal for mercy for some time.

At length he said: "There is only one way, Sir Charles Evander, in which you can escape, one of the three punishments which I have just described to you."

"And that is—?" cried Evander, looking up eagerly. "You must consent to marry Miss St. Aubyn, whom your conduct has so cruelly scandalised and compromised beyond redemption unless you become her husband."

"I consent," answered Evander. "I will marry Miss St. Aubyn when and where you please. This I promise you on my word of honour."

Frederick Mordaunt inclined his head, and one of the men assisting Sir Charles to rise, and placed a seat for him in the middle of the room. Then the judge, who was so inexorable, drew a small black box from the pocket of his coat, and opening it, exhibited it to Evander. It was divided into two compartments, one of which contained six black pastilles not much larger than pills; the other, six yellow pastilles.

"The doctor from whom I obtained these," said Mr. Mordaunt, "has been long in India, and is well-versed in the nature of vegetable poisons. The black pastilles contain a venomous matter which will cause death in three hours. The yellow ones are the antidote, and will counteract the effects of the other. Do you understand?"

Sir Charles Evander bowed his head; he could not speak.

"If I consent to put on one side the red hot iron, the vitriol, and the living tomb, it is a cessary that I should take my precautions. An oath extracted by violence is binding on nobody, and you would doubtless feel yourself at liberty to break your word as soon as I gave you your pardon. Miss St. Aubyn is in the house above us; the banns of marriage have been proclaimed in the parish church every Sunday for the last three weeks, and a clergyman will be here to marry you to-morrow morning. I shall visit you an hour before the ceremony is fixed to take place and give you the poison; you will then be completely in my power, and cannot escape, for if you play me false you must die, as I alone have the antidote. For the present we shall leave you; on a side-table you will find bread and water, which is all the refreshment I am disposed to offer you."

Sir Charles Evander regarded him with hatred

mingled with admiration. His plans were well taken; he had not omitted a single detail.

The next minute he was alone. His captors took their departure, the heavy door swung to sullenly behind them, and he was left to his own reflections.

(To be continued.)

## SCIENCE.

**ACIDITY OF MINE-WATERS.**—The acidity of mine-waters, so often noticed and so deleterious to steam-boilers, has been the subject of some remarks by Dr. Willigk, who has analyzed water from a coal-pit in Bohemia. It contained, says the *Scientific Review*, acid sulphates and free sulphuric acid in notable quantity. He recommended that it should be filtered with natural carbonate of baryta which is very abundant in the locality. The experiment was successful, and prevented the corrosion of the boilers and machinery. Chalk of limestone would have proved equally efficacious.

**A NEW COPPER MINE.**—It is not every day that a new copper mine is discovered in England; we understand, however, that a very important cuprififerous lode has recently been found about three miles south-west of Tavistock, in Devonshire, and that mining operations have been already begun upon it. It has been called the *Virtuous Lady Mine*. Indications of the lode were discovered this summer, and the lode itself was cut about a fortnight ago. The ore is stated to be very rich in copper, and to contain some silver, and traces of gold. We may remark here that the position of the *Virtuous Lady Mine* appears to us to correspond to a spot that was worked at the commencement of this century, and yielded very large quantities of rich copper ore. It was nevertheless abandoned for want of proper mining appliances, after being worked to a depth of seventeen fathoms only. If such is the case, we expect the discovery will prove very valuable.

**RADIATION OF HEAT FROM THE MOON.**—The Earl of Rosse is making a series of experiments by means of a thermo-pile of four elements and a 3-foot telescope, to determine, if possible, what proportion of the moon's heat consists of: 1. That coming from the interior of the moon, which will not vary with the phase; 2. That which falls from the sun on the moon's surface, and is at once reflected regularly and irregularly; 3. That which falling from the sun on the moon's surface is absorbed, raises the temperature of the moon's surface, and is afterwards radiated as heat of low refrangibility. The chief result arrived at up to the present moment is, that (the radiating power of the moon being taken as equal to lampblack, and the earth's atmosphere supposed not to affect the result) a deviation of 90 deg. for full moon appears to indicate an elevation of temperature equal to 500 deg. Fah. The relative amount of solar and lunar radiation was found to be equal to 89817: 1.

**THE CHESHIRE SALT MINES.**—The quantity of salt made in Cheshire in the year 1869 is stated at 1,250,000 tons, the same quantity as that reported in the preceding year; but the quantities sent down the river Weaver show a large increase, the quantity of rock salt sent down in the year ending with March, 1869, reaching 58,696 tons of 26 cwt. and of white salt, 901,566 tons, making a total of 960,262 tons. The return of the quantity of salt made in Worcestershire show 240,000 tons in 1868—namely, 115,000 tons at Droitwich, and 125,000 tons at Stoke Prior. In Ireland the quantity in 1868 was 23,840 tons, an increase of 4,151 tons over the preceding year. The export of salt from the United Kingdom continues to increase. In 1865 it was 579,050 tons; in 1866, 601,440 tons; in 1867, 724,333 tons; in 1868, 797,592 tons. The declared value of the salt exported in 1868 was 485,537*l*. The increase is chiefly in the exports to India and to Russia.

**THE GOVERNMENT TELEGRAPHS IN FRANCE.**—A few remarks will serve to illustrate the manner in which Government control over the telegraphs in France is exercised, for the convenience and benefit of the public. After the 1st November next, the charge for a message from any one port of France to another will be reduced from 2*frs.* to 1*fr.*, or to something under one shilling. The reduction of the uniform rate of 1*fr.* was enacted by the Chamber of Deputies in July, 1868; but more than a year has been required to make preparations for the increased correspondence which is expected to ensue on the increase of facilities and diminution of charge. Besides the construction of numerous branch lines, the Morse instrument has been replaced by the Hughes' printing apparatus at all the important stations. The use of Hughes' apparatus doubles the rapidity of communication; in other words, will enable twice as many messages to be forwarded in the same time. The number of offices has been greatly increased; it now amounts to 2,701, of which 1,071 are government offices, the remaining 1,000 being at railway

stations, whence messages are forwarded according to an arrangement made with the government. No difficulty is experienced in obtaining the required number of signalmen. At the last examination 230 were admitted. At present the French telegraph extends over 25,000 miles of line, and the number of messages annually amounts to 3,500,000.

**NEW PROCESS OF REFINING IRON.**—Mr. Palmer Budd's new process of refining iron was shown, in the works of Messrs. Bolckow and Vaughan, to the members of the National Iron and Steel Institute, after their meeting at Middlesbrough. It appears that a patent has been taken out by Mr. Budd for the invention of such "improvements in the manufacture of iron and steel" as shall henceforth render the process of puddling much quicker and easier. This valuable result is said to be accomplished by the subjecting of molten cast-iron to the action of soda and soft hematite iron ore—or other oxide of iron—previous to its being subjected to the puddling process. It was alleged by the patentee that the puddlers much prefer the iron in this condition, as it lessens and helps their work, and also that it will tend materially to cheapen the process of manufacture. In his opinion, the money value of the invention to the iron trade will be enormous; greater, perhaps, than that arising from the use of blast-furnace gas, said to be 1,000,000*l.* a-year, and which Mr. Budd first introduced into this country, and made known to the iron trade at the meeting of the British Association held at Swansea in 1849.

**FOUR-SIDE Moulding MACHINE.**—A moulding machine, on which every variety of moulding—from the largest and most complicated, down to the smallest—can, it is said, be made with the greatest rapidity and accuracy, is illustrated by an engraving and details in the *American Gaslight Journal*. The upper cylinder or outer-head, slotted on four sides, is 10in. to 14in. long, of the best gun metal, on a  $\frac{1}{2}$ in. cast-steel arbour driven at both ends by  $\frac{3}{4}$ in. diameter, 5in. face pulleys. A few of the many kinds of work this machine is said to be capable of doing are:—Double surfacing and matching to 10in., planing and matching staves, planing siding, sticking stair rail, or moulding from 10in. by 5in. down to the smallest. It will work a single moulding on four sides, and cut out a square angular corner-piece, saving a strip of lumber large enough to make a moulding. It will also work two lines of mouldings, one of which can be separated by the saw as they are made, thereby finishing three lines of mouldings at the same time, and will work all three on four sides at the same operation, each one of which will be finished as well as any machine will finish a single moulding. It is capable of working 50,000ft. of moulding per day. The tight and loose pulleys are 12in. in diameter, 6in. face, and should make 900 revolutions per minute, giving heads 4,000. Weight without box, 3,350*lbs.*

**DO ANIMALS SEE THE SAME LUMINOUS RAYS AS MAN?**—M. Paul Bert has recently been experimenting on this subject, and has published his results. The method he adopted was to place a number of the little *Daphnia*, so common in our ponds and cisterns, into a small vessel the interior of which was well blackened, and into which light could only obtain access through a narrow slit. The *Daphnia* distributed themselves tolerably equally through the darkened vessel, but on transmitting a ray of ordinary light through the fluid they immediately gave signs of agitation, and grouped themselves in and around the illuminated path of the ray. On interposing a screen they rapidly dispersed. M. Bert next proceeded to try the effects of variously coloured rays; and he found that the same agitation and the same grouping occurred whatever might be the colour of the ray transmitted. At the suggestion of Dr. Krishaber, he transmitted several separate beams of different colour through the same vessel, and found then that the animals collected chiefly in the yellow, green, and in that portion of the spectrum which was slightly tinted of an orange colour. A considerable number were also seen in the red ray, fewer in the blue, and less and less numbers in the violet and ultra-violet. From these and other experiments, M. Bert concludes that all animals see the rays of the spectrum as we see them; that they do not perceive any rays that are not perceptible to ourselves; and, lastly, that in the range of vision the difference between the illuminating powers of the differently coloured rays is the same for them as it is for us.

**BERMUDA FLOATING DOCK.**—We are in a position to state that the reports circulated in some of the daily journals implying want of management and forethought on the part of the officials under whose auspices the floating dock was recently sent to Bermuda are entirely groundless. There has not been any misadventure connected with the undertaking, nor has any contingency arisen that was not foreseen and met in anticipation. In the Chamber at Ireland

Island there is an average depth of 30ft. at low water and as the dock when light only draws 11ft. 2in. there is nothing to prevent her going into it. For the dredging that is necessary to admit of the dock being worked a suitable dredger has been prepared, and the probability of damage to the wharf wall is very remote, as the excavation from the bed of the Chamber requisite to enable the Bermuda to be sunk for docking a ship will be made at such a distance from the wall as to set at rest any fears for its stability.

**ELECTRICITY.**—As to the electric light we in England are shamefully neglecting it, in the opinion of other nations. The French are trying it everywhere, and twitting every maritime country with not using it on shipboard, improving the occasion whenever a collision occurs at sea. One American railway company is about to light up its tunnels *a giorno* by electricity, and illuminate the awkward curves of the line at night. The engines, too, are to carry electric lamps. Mr. Morse, famed in telegraphy, is experimenting upon the production of electricity by the friction of the carriage wheels at their bearings. The medical galvanists—quacks, mostly—are asking for greater faith in their asserted cures. One of them, in France, declares that he can render children, bodily and mentally weak, physically and intellectually strong. The dull girl or the stupid boy can be brightened, and their aptitude for learning vastly increased, by stirring their brains with electricity. There may be something in this: clever surgeons know that the fluid stimulates the action of sluggish nerves and muscles of the body. Why not those of the brain? Schoolmasters, lay aside the birch and buy a battery!

### WHERE TO STUDY.

The air of a cellar is close, damp, musty, and vitiated; that of the house-top is clear, pure, and bracing. On the surface of the earth the atmosphere is cold, raw, and impure; on the mountains it is dry, rarified, and healthgiving. The purer the air is the more life does it impart to the blood, the more perfectly is the brain nourished, and the more vigorously does the mind work and the body move. Hence the "study" of the clergyman, the "office" of the physician and the lawyer, and the "library" of the family; the "sitting-room" of the household, and the "chamber" of every sleeper, should always be in the upper stories, not merely for the greater purity of the air, but for a reason seldom thought of, and yet of very great sanitary value.

The higher we ascend the more rarified is the air, the greater bulk is required to impart a given amount of nourishment to the system; this greater rarity excites the instinct of our nature to deeper, fuller breathing, without any effort on our part, and this kind of breathing, as the reflecting must know, is antagonistic to consumption, that fell scourge of civilised society, which destroys full one-sixth of the adult population. Hence the very suggestive remark of the distinguished naturalist Buffon: "All animals inhabiting high altitudes have larger lungs and more capacious chests than those which live in the valleys."

In the same direction is the suggestive statement that in the city of Mexico, situated nine thousand feet above the level of the sea, of one hundred dying annually only three are from consumption; while in our larger cities but few feet above the level of the sea, eighteen out of every hundred dead perish from that disease. It should therefore be the aim of every student, of every sedentary person, of every invalid, to have the room in which a very large portion of the inactive part of life is spent, as far above the ground-floor as practicable, and in such a situation as will allow the sun to shine into it for the longest portion of each day, for this rarifies the air still more, and still more aids in developing and expanding the lungs by the greater depth and fullness of breathing which the increased atmospheric rarity induces.

It is now finally settled that Lord Napier of Magdala will succeed Sir William Mansfield as Commander-in-Chief in India next year.

**NEW SPECIES OF SUN FISH.**—Mr. M. Dunn, of Mevagissey says: "A short time since a large specimen of, that occasional summer visitor to our coast from the deep sea, the sun-fish (*Cephalus brevis*, Cuvier), was found by Thomas Pollard, fisherman of Mevagissey, sleeping on the surface of the water within the circuit of our bay. After a long contest for the fish, which was over 200*lb* in weight, it was captured. On its being landed a strange-looking parasite animal was found clinging to its side. Not knowing its name and genus, I forwarded it to Mr. J. Couch of Polperro, who, after much research and consultation, and with the authority of Dr. J. E. Gray, of the British Museum, pronounces it to belong to a genus hitherto unknown to science. The name assigned to the creature is *Penulus Filifera*. It has now been sent to the British Museum, a sketch only being kept by Mr. Couch."





[INEZ SHOWS ELATYBANK NO MERCY.]

## THE BIRTH MARK.

### CHAPTER XXIII.

We left Carola in a very difficult situation, and the wretched Lotta in fearful peril.

The immense mastiff, who would probably have left Lotta after giving his rage the satisfaction of a severe bite and a thorough shaking, became savage as she struggled to escape, and tore her dreadfully before Inez de Parma and her servants could beat him off.

"Sue is badly injured," said the countess, as Lotta lay senseless upon the paved yard. "Carry her to her room."

But at that moment Lotta opened her eyes and stared about her.

"The dog! the brute! I will have his life!" she cried, springing to her feet, wounded as she was, for her rage and desire for revenge made her insensible to her hurts. "Where is the dog?"

She rushed from the spot to seek a weapon, and Inez de Parma knowing that she must soon fall from exhaustion and loss of blood, gave no order to those around to restrain her, but turned away, thinking:

"If she dies I shall be glad. She has grown too overbearing and insolent of late. Go to your room, all of you. Ah, you see! Lotta has fallen again—"

"St. Iago?" cried a commanding voice, at that moment.

It sounded like a shout in the street, but in a moment after, six or eight rough-looking men dropped over the yard fence as if they fell from the sky, and Inez de Parma recognised Diego Gomez among them.

There was no noise, not enough to arouse any who were locked in the slumbers of midnight, and Diego Gomez alone spoke in a low tone to Inez.

"You had better go in, my lady. There need be no noise to create a scandal in the interference of the police. The Duke D'Ossiri is no doubt already in the house, and the duchess, also. The duke comes to claim his daughter."

"He comes like a brigand," replied the countess, astounded and enraged. "We are not in Madrid, Diego Gomez—"

"There is a man behind the cistern," said one of Diego's party, in a low tone, "and a young lady in a faint."

"Shall we call the police, madam?" asked one of the servants of the house.

"No. I do not wish a great disturbance," replied Inez, who had no desire to have the minions of the law rambling over her house. They might find Pedro

Diaz, blinded by her hand. They might find that detective. Affairs had come to a crisis very suddenly and in a manner totally unexpected. She would go into the house and confront the duke and duchess. If forced to do it she would give up Carola, and on the morrow, when Pedro Diaz and the detective were not in the way, she would claim the protection of the laws of the country.

She would have Carola back. What proof had the duke that Carola was not her niece, now that James Raymond was dead? Rosa Baetta! What could Rosa Baetta do without James Raymond? Nothing. All proof was in her possession.

If the duke took Carola by force he would commit a crime, a great crime. The English were very jealous of the protection of their laws. The duke would be forced to give Carola up, yes, before morning—before daylight, for as soon as this disturbance should be removed from her house she would have the duke and all his party arrested as housebreakers, as burglars, as kidnappers. No police must enter her premises and blunder upon Pedro Diaz and that detective.

All this flashed through her mind instantly, and before she returned to the house, she said aloud to the gaping servants, six or seven in number:

"I will be very angry with anyone that dares call the police upon my premises. Go to your beds. If I need you I will call for you."

The servants knew that she was a severe mistress, and never forgave the slightest disobedience, yet, though they dared not call the police, and indeed why should they, since their mistress forbade them, retired to the kitchen to wonder what all this meant, for they had not heard what Diego said to the countess.

Inez de Parma entered her house and closed the door. It had ever been a part of her nature to plot and intrigue, yet her cunning and caution had always kept her reputation unspotted since her arrival in London, and she knew that a good reputation was as strong as an army to back her against any charge which the Duke or Duchess D'Ossiri could or might make. She possessed great wealth, too, in gold and jewels, and knew many of the chief magistrates of the city. They would befriend her, for she would deny everything, and besides, it could be proved that the duke had been insane for years.

Inez de Parma, therefore, entered her house with a haughty step, and with a sneer upon her lips, for she thought that the duke had destroyed his case by this violence, this actual burglary.

As Diego had intimated, the duke had entered by

the front door, which had been left unlocked. The duchess, Zaretta, and Alfred Raymond entered with him, and with the boldness which had ever characterised him when in his perfect mind, he proceeded to the first room in which he saw a light burning.

It was that of Inez de Parma, and Kampton sprang to his feet as the duke and his party appeared.

The duke had learned something of Kampton from Alfred Raymond, and amazed him with a steady gaze of contempt.

Kampton, much amazed by this unexpected intrusion, nevertheless instantly recognised in the features of the duke the gentleman whom he had seen at Senora Goliari's, and whom he now knew to be the Duke D'Ossiri.

Jasper Reel could only gape and stare, for all this was a mystery to him. At first he had imagined this party a bevy of witnesses or guests to the intended marriage, but a glance at the pale and angry features of Robert Kampton told him that the supposition was false.

Kampton exchanged glances of hate and defiance with Alfred Raymond, and then fixed his eyes upon the duke.

"He has every feature of Inez de Parma. He is not the nephew; he is her son," said the duke, aloud.

"And there are those who are ready to swear that I am the son of Ferdinand, Duke D'Ossiri," remarked Kampton, haughtily.

The duke replied to this with a stare of boundless scorn:

"Still, I can see Pedro Diaz in his eyes, in his soul, and in his effrontery," said the duke.

"You will see much of Pedro Diaz in his punishment of your insolence," retorted Kampton, advancing angrily.

"Stay," said a sharp voice, "there must be no violence in this house!"

The duke turned and beheld Inez de Parma.

She glanced warningly at her son. He understood her, and remained silent. Like his cunning mother, it was the presence of the police that he feared.

"What do you desire in my house, sir?" demanded the countess, gazing upon the duke without the slightest sign of recognition.

Then perceiving Alfred Raymond, she added:

"So, you have returned, after being rejected with contempt. Well, what message does James Raymond send now?"

"No doubt you know that my unfortunate father has been smitten down by an assassin," replied Alfred, returning her stare with one of measureless dis-

like. "Perhaps you know also who aimed the blow and who struck it. There is one who almost saw the deed," he added, with a glance which increased the pallor of Kampton's cheek. "I am here to demand the person of Carola Fairmont."

"To demand! You are neither her father, brother, nor relative."

"I demand her as my daughter—stolen by you, Inez de Parma," said the duchess.

"And who are you?" demanded the countess, sharply.

"Can you look me in the eyes, Inez de Parma, divorced wife of Pedro Diaz, and ask me who I am?" said the Countess D'Ossiri.

"I can, very easily, for I never saw you before; nor do I know why you call me Inez de Parma."

"You deny that you are that most infamous woman! Ah, I see your plan; and I scorn it, as I over did you, and the love you begged me to accept," said the duke.

A bright flash seemed to dart from the dark eyes of the countess, and her thin lips turned ashy white with rage, but she trampled upon her wrath and held firmly to her resolutions.

"I do not know you, nor any of your party—except the contemptible fellow whom I expelled from my house this evening," she said, and would have said more, had not the duchess suddenly rushed forward and grasped the garments, bracelets, and rings which still remained upon the table, and exclaimed:

"Liar and thief! see—here are the very garments and ornaments which were worn by my child when you stole her!"

"And on her finger she wears a ring which was my mother's," added the duke. "Shameless woman! Do you still dare to deny that you do not know the D'Ossiri family? Do you dare say that you are not the evil Inez de Parma who palmed herself upon my wife as our nurse, and stole our infant? Deny it, and I will summon a host of witnesses from Spain, every one of whom will swear that you are that wretch—the outlawed and condemned Countess de Parma."

She was sorry that she had been so careless, but her calmness and resolution did not desert her.

"Do you claim my niece, Carola Fairmont, as your daughter? Is that what you mean?"

"I claim her. Let me see her. I have seen her, and therefore I am here to claim her," said the duchess.

Inez de Parma would have spoken in reply, but at that moment Carola herself sprang into the room, and rushed into the arms of Alfred Raymond.

"Ah, they told me you were in the house, Alfred," she exclaimed, as her over-joyed lover pressed her to his bosom. "I had almost escaped, but fainted in the yard, to recover and find myself surrounded by strange faces. One told me to rally, for you were in the house with others who would protect me."

Inez de Parma wondered how she had escaped, but her wonder began to change to terror when Diego Gomez entered, leading blind Pedro Diaz. Then both had escaped.

She said nothing, however, for the duke sprang at the throat of the Portuguese, exclaiming:

"Dog of a robber! Have I caught you at last! Assassin! Accomplish that infamous woman!"

"Stay your hand, my lord," said Pedro, hoarsely and trembling. "Stay your hand, and I may make your heart as light as a bird's. I am blind, my lord, or I would not have let Diego Gomez take me so easily."

"Do not harm him, sir," asked Carola, warmly, and placing her hand upon that of the duke. "I saw his eyes put out."

"By whom?" exclaimed the duke, freeing Pedro from his grasp.

"That woman," replied Carola, pointing to Inez de Parma.

"She saw me. How? Ah, the little window. How fatally careless in me to have forgotten that," thought the countess, whose stern defiance now began to quail before the avalanche of ruin.

"Are you here, Inez de Parma?" roared Pedro Diaz, foaming with rage. "I'd give ten lives for one minute of that sight which you tore from me, devil that you are! Millions of curses cling to you, hyena cat! My lord, I swore to reward the brave girl who aided my escape when I was gagged, bound, and blind. You know that this accursed woman stole your child in Spain, and that I had something to do in the matter. But for that brave girl, who would not desert me, I would defy you still, blind as I am, and but for some little revenge upon Inez de Parma. Your daughter lives. She is the brave girl who aided me. They call her Carola Fairmont. Deny it if you dare, Inez de Parma. Now, my brave lass, you are a duke's daughter, and not the niece of a miserable, revengeful wretch."

"Ah, then I am again parentless," muttered Zaretta.

"My child! My heart did not deceive me," exclaimed the duchess, embracing Carola.

The duke was greatly amazed and seriously perplexed. The silence of Inez de Parma, who had sunk into a chair, the garments and the other articles upon the table, and the assertion of Pedro Diaz, confounded him.

He grasped the shoulder of the Portuguese, and spoke fiercely:

"Are you not lying, villain? Do you swear that this maiden, whom they call Carola Fairmont, is my child? Have you any proof beyond your oath?"

"I swear it, my lord," replied Pedro firmly. "Ask Inez de Parma. She has been plotting to marry her to her son, the man she calls her nephew—"

"Then he is her son?" said the duke.

"He is her son. She has plotted to marry him to your daughter."

Inez de Parma saw all her plans for resistance crumbling. Denial was useless, for Carola would testify to what she had seen and heard. Carola had seen her blind Pedro Diaz, had heard her conversation, Carola's evidence in court would strip the mask from the face of Inez de Parma.

Still she remained silent, trying to find a loophole for escape. This attack was so overwhelming, so like the explosion of a mine beneath her that her brain seemed whirling in the air. If she only had time to think, if every thing was not pressing her on every side, all might be turned aside.

She sat with her back towards the door of that room into which she had led the detective, and Robert Kampton stood behind the chair.

He bent over her and whispered:

"Have you nothing to say?"

"Nothing. At least not now. You see how everything has come upon me—with a crash. There is nothing left for us to think of but revenge."

As she spoke Kampton was leaning over her to catch her words. His attention was absorbed and his hands were crossed behind him.

Jasper Reel had retreated to a corner of the room, eager to escape from observation. He had marked the fierce anger of the duke against the Portuguese, he had heard that Alfred Raymond hated vice and was quick to crush its votaries. If these two, the duke and Alfred, should suspect that he was there to force a marriage upon Carola, the father and the lover would beat him to a jelly and annihilate him.

He had not been noticed, yet he could not escape. So he remained motionless in his corner, watching and trembling.

His mind was heavy too, with the fate of the detective, and he stared at the door behind Kampton as if he feared the man would suddenly open it and come in to denounce this evil woman as the others had, come in gory and ghastly, with his throat cut, to point out Jasper Reel as an accessory before the murder.

As he stared he almost shrieked aloud, for he saw the door open, saw a thin, resolute face peep in, saw the door open wide and recognised Flaybank the detective.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

INEZ DE PARMA, when she led Mr. Flaybank from the room, as we have described in a previous chapter, did it with the firm purpose of putting him to instant death. The urgency of the case demanded that he should be silenced for ever, and she was not a woman to hesitate at murder to save her son's life, and to preserve intact her schemes.

She had led the helpless detective through the next room to a closet, which she unlocked, opened and then pushed him in.

He, bound and gagged, could make no resistance, or cry for aid. He fell from the violence of her push, and with the knife which Reel had seen in her hand she stabbed him the back. But the blade scarcely more than penetrated the skin, for it first encountered the cord with which Reel had bound his arms. The point was thrown aside and the edge cut the hand of Inez as her grasp slipped from the handle to the blade.

She stabbed again. Fortune again saved the life of the detective, for the blade struck again upon a cord, severing it, and inflicting only a deep flesh wound.

"I am striking in the dark," thought the murderous countess, "and will smear myself with blood. Best wait until Carola is disposed of, and bring a light with me. As it is, he may bleed to death before I return. He cannot cry out, and no one ever enters this room but me, I will leave him. Besides, I have wounded my hand."

She closed the closet door, and as she did so the key fell from the lock upon the carpet. She groped for it, but could not find it.

"It does not matter," she thought. "There is no door to this room, except that which opens into mine, and no one will enter."

As we have related, she then returned to the other room, and washed her hands.

Mr. Flaybank being left alone, and smarting with his wounds, became very restless, and in twisting about he discovered that his wrists were quite loosely bound.

While being led through the streets by Robert Kampton, he had not dared to try the strength of Jasper Reel's cords and knots, but he now ventured to pull and try. The knife had severed one cord, and the detective soon released his hands.

After much struggling he succeeded in getting out a pocket-knife and in opening it. With this he cut the cords binding his arms to his body. It was a slow and tedious work, and he cut his arms in several places; still he persevered until he was fully unbound, ungagged and had removed the baudage from his eyes.

"Come, I may not be a dead man, after all," he thought, trying the closet door, and rejoicing as he felt it yield noiselessly to his touch.

The light shining through the keyhole of the adjoining room led him to that door, and he used his eyes and ears to learn what was going on.

It was as he reached the door that Pedro Diaz was led into the apartment of Inez de Parma by Diego.

"Come, I am saved," thought the detective, as he listened to what the reader has learned. "I will find friends to aid me. Let me try this door-knob."

The knob turned without noise, but had it been rusty, the nice touch and experienced hand of the cautious detective would have made no more noise than a knife makes in cutting butter.

He opened the door slowly, swinging it back on its well-oiled hinges.

A glance showed him Alfred Raymond, the duke, and Diego. He did not know the two last, but he knew they were not accomplices of Robert Kampton whose form he recognised.

He drew a pair of handcuffs from his pocket, and as quick as light grasped Kampton's crossed wrists, and slipped the manacles upon them.

Dr. Robert Kampton was a prisoner before he could wheel upon his assailant.

"I arrest you for the murder of James Raymond," said the detective, as the criminal recoiled on discovering his situation. "Allow me to search you," continued the expert officer, driving his nimble hands into Kampton's pockets. "Ah, here is the lancet case! Oh, you have replaced the diamond button! I will take care of that also."

"Villain!" cried the countess, "release my son! I will go his bail, if it is half a million!"

"Very sorry, ma'am. Murder is not a bailable offence. Can't bail before we see a magistrate. I recognise your voice, ma'am. You are the lady that locked me into the closet. Stabbed me. Allow me to make you a present—pair of bracelets—iron, but good."

And Mr. Flaybank produced another pair of handcuffs, which he snapped around the wrists of Inez de Parma before she could imagine what he was doing.

"I arrest you as accessory to the murder of James Raymond, and for attempt to murder Roger Flaybank, your humble servant, ma'am."

Here his eye fell upon Pedro Diaz.

"Oh, my Portuguese! I have a pair for you. I arrest you for burglary on the premises of James Raymond. Sorry you are blind. Make a charge of assault, battery, kidnapping, &c., &c., against the lady. Good fit, eh? Don't chafe, eh?" muttered Mr. Flaybank, as he snapped the fastening of the handcuffs.

Jasper Reel was quivering in the corner like a huge lump of jelly. Mr. Flaybank was as active as a squirrel, and Reel was as clumsy as a hoghead at that moment. If he was out in the street he felt that he could run like a greyhound. But he was in a corner, and could only stare and hope that Flaybank would overlook him in this wholesale distribution of arrests and handcuffs.

Mr. Flaybank had his eye on him already, and after a quick, sharp jerk of Pedro's wrists to see if they were secure, he pounced upon Jasper Reel.

"Only one more left, Reel; all out but one. Glad I can accommodate all my friends. Wouldn't forget you for the world. I arrest you for receiving stolen goods knowingly, and concealing the same."

"Can't I turn Queen's evidence?" puffed Mr. Reel, as the handcuffs clicked around his fat wrists.

"We do not need your evidence. Sorry. But I have enough proof to cover all parties."

Jasper Reel groaned in very agony of spirit. He had been a thief and scoundrel for many years, and had never been caught until now. He lifted up his voice and howled.

Inez de Parma glared at her manacled wrists for but an instant after they had been thus disgraced, and then struggled successfully to get a small phial from her belt. It was a little golden phial with a crystal stopper, and she had worn it in her belt for



years. She opened the phial with her teeth, swallowed half its contents, and offered it to Kampton, whispering:

"Drink—there's enough for you too. In a few moments all will be over."

But Alfred Raymond sprang forward too late to baffle the countess, but in time to dash the phial from the hands of her son.

"No, assassin!" said Alfred, bitterly; "if my father dies, his murderer shall not escape the gallows."

Kampton glared at him, made a vain attempt to strike him, and sank into a chair with the horrors of that gallows staring him in the face and beating upon his brain.

"No Spanish duke," exclaimed Inez de Parma, fiercely, "especially Ferdinand, Duke D'Ossiri, will ever allow his only daughter to wed a contemptible lawyer. Duke, that maiden is your daughter, the child I stole from your palace in Madrid. I shall be dead before I can be carried from this room, for I have swallowed poison—quick, painless, and sure; and I swear to you not to rejoice your heart, but to wreck the happiness of Alfred Raymond—that Carolina is your daughter, the lost Countess Perdita. No Spanish duke can stoop to wed the only one of his name to an ignoble foreigner, whose mercenary father has plotted to—"

"Silence," said the duke. "If farther examination proves that Carolina is my child there is no noble in all Spain who can make her happy, and my word is pledged to Alfred Raymond. So do not think, Inez de Parma, that your malignity can taint my honour. If you have, as you say, swallowed deadly poison, I know the fact will rejoice the hearts of the noble family which your life has disgraced and grieved. May heaven forgive you as I do, for all the misery you dealt to me."

The duke, still grasping the hand of Zaretta, turned his back upon the infamous wretch, who even in dying wished to scatter hate and revenge upon those whom she had injured.

"Zaretta," he said, "you may not be my daughter, yet you are very dear to me. If not the child of my body, you are the child of my soul, and if you desire a more fond and devoted father than I shall prove, I will aid you in seeking him."

"Fate is against me," replied Zaretta, "but you, my lord, shall be my father—"

"And I your loving sister," said Carolina, to whom the duchess had imparted all that she knew of Zaretta. "I love you already, and I am sure that the duke, my father it seems, will soon love us both alike."

Zaretta returned the warm caress of the generous-hearted Carolina, yet with deep sadness at her heart. She remembered the words of Count Rocco, and that if his belief was true, she could not be the wife of Leonto, whom she so passionately loved; and if that belief were to be proved false, Count Rocco, proud and immovable in his resolves, would never consent that his only son, a duke of Italy and heir to a princedom, should wed an opera-singer, who did not know even her origin.

"Ah!" she sighed, "I cannot believe that poor Rosa Baetta has deceived me."

This thought had scarcely flashed through her mind, when a loud noise was made in the hall, and Mad Jack sprang into the room, bearing Rosa Baetta in his arms.

(To be continued.)

**FATAL ACCIDENT AT NIAGARA.**—A most melancholy accident occurred recently on the Canada shore of the Niagara River, in the vicinity of the Falls. A party consisting of one gentleman and four ladies, all belonging to Providence, Rhode Island, were on their way home from Buffalo, and crossed over on the Canada side. While their carriage was passing the curve opposite the precipice in front of the Clifton House the horses became unmanageable, and, as it was evident they would go over the bank the driver and Mr. Tillinghast, the Providence gentlemen, jumped off the seat and escaped with slight injury; the horses and carriage, together with the four ladies, went down the bank, however, a distance of some fifty-nine feet. Mrs. Mahala Smith, one of the party, was horribly mangled and instantly killed, and Miss Mary Ann Ballou was so dangerously injured that she cannot possibly recover. Mrs. Tillinghast and a Mrs. Fisher were badly bruised, but their wounds are not dangerous. The accident happened while an inquest was being held on the body of a man who committed suicide at the same place a day or two previously. The sad event cast a gloom of sorrow over all the tourists at the Falls. There were rumours about the carelessness of the driver, and there was of course, corresponding indignation.

"THE SIAMESE LINK."—This toy, which has recently been popularised by the London Stereoscopic Company, is an adaptation of one made for

many years by the American Indians, and sold at the Indian toy-shops at Niagara Falls and elsewhere under the name of the "Indian puzzle." Hamilton, as long ago as 1847, called attention to the puzzle, and suggested that it might be useful for the purpose of making extension upon dislocated fingers; and in his classical work on "Fractures and Dislocations" he thus described it:—"The 'puzzle' is an elongated cane of about sixteen or eighteen inches in length, made of ash-splittings, and braided; the open end of the cone being about three-fourths of an inch in diameter, and the opposite end terminating in a braided cord. When applied to the finger, it is slipped on lightly, forming a cap to the extremity and to half the length of the finger; but, on traction being made from the opposite end, it fastens itself to the limb with the most uncompromising grasp. When we wish to remove it, we have only to cease pulling, and it drops off spontaneously." This toy has been modified by its English producers, so that it is open at both ends, and those rash enough to insert their fingers find themselves effectually handcuffed or attached to a fellow in misfortune.

## GRAND COURT.

BY THE

Author of "Sometimes Sapphire, Sometimes Pale," &c.

### CHAPTER XXXVI.

The hour o' triumph comes,  
The pageant and the pomp of purple power  
Are round his house.

His path is strewn with gold,  
Yet o'er his guilty head suspending hangs the sword,  
Trembling, held on by that one single hair.  
It threatens him with loss, and shame, and death.

Marcell Fox.

ROKEWOOD and the countess sat over their breakfast-table in gloomy Cumberton Manor, that dark, lonely house amid the Northern hills, whither they had come to lay their dark plots, and to carry out their diabolical schemes. It was that snowy morning which followed on the hideous night when Norah had so miraculously escaped from the mansion of Squire Macray. The garden seen through the low French windows of the dining-room, was spread over with a white smooth carpet; more and more snow kept on falling through the foggy air. The fire burnt brightly, and the table was loaded with luxurious viands, but the two guilty wretches shivered with cold, and the meat pies, the game, the hot cakes, the fragrant coffee, and strong bohea, remained almost untouched between them. The countess was wrapped in a rich Indian shawl, embroidered with gold and gorgeous colours. Her hair was in some disorder, her face looked ten years older than when she went off a couple of weeks before in search of Hammond Danvers, dressed in all the style and brilliance of fashion, of expense, and of youth.

Since that time disappointed passion, conscience, or at least remorse, had ploughed into the handsome face, had wrinkled the brow, robbed the cheek of its bloom, and the great eyes of their brightness; there was indeed a lurid fire smouldering now in their dark cavernous depths, but it was not the same fire as before that terrible night, when she had consigned the bound and suffering Hammond to merciless hands; when she had listened for the cry, "all right," from the villainous wretches who had done her fiendish bidding, and peering down into the deep shadow of the railway cutting, scarcely visible under the influence of a moonless and but faintly starlight night, she had just distinguished the form of Hammond bound to the block of wood, and awaiting his death by the coming of the crushing deadly engine.

She had driven off, laughing a demon's laugh, telling herself that the man who had refused her love deserved nothing but death at her hands, and glancing over the misery of Norah, the sweet girl bride, widowed as soon as wed.

When the excitement of the deed had subsided, when, having most handsomely paid the men, she was driven to Cumberton, and, after having ordered a fire, retired to the privacy of her own chamber, refusing pertinaciously to see Rokewood, or to tell him upon what expedition she had been absent for two days; when, sitting down before the glow of her own fire, she bethought her of the man she so madly worshipped, lying bound in the railway cutting, the winter rain beating in his face, and that fearful death bearing surely towards him as the hour grew later—then the terrible woman arose and tore her long black hair which fell in masses to her waist, and paced up and down her room like a caged tigress. There were moments when the woman had had wild thoughts of calling out her carriage and driving the twelve or fourteen miles to the railway cutting, and descending with the hope of rescuing

the man upon whom she had set her fatal love from approaching death.

She restrained herself—she was less woman than fiend—and she restrained herself. She remembered Norah, the bride, waiting in the inn the return of the bridegroom whom she was never to see again. She thought of the cool, decisive manner in which the young man had rejected her tenderness and attempted an escape, under circumstances of pitiless difficulty and danger. Then she was delighted at the remembrance of what she had done. She clasped her hands with a fiend's exultation.

"Never more hers," she cried, "any more than he is mine. Silent to her by this time to-morrow as he is to me, deaf to her voice and love, blind to her young beauty. Oh! hasten on, hasten on, good night train, trample and stamp out all trace of humanity; deface and make hideous the glorious beauty which made me its slave, and conspired to render my keen reason the vassal of my keen heart."

Thus had the false countess raved and paced her chamber.

"Hammond was dead! Hammond was dead!" she told herself.

The next morning, when the cold gray light broke through her chamber window, he was dead, the man she had loved. She had been scorned, she was avenged, and now she would enjoy life her own way; she would hastily remove the twins from her path, pay off the hired assassins and the tribe of miscreants she and Rokewood had engaged to do their bidding, and then return to London, and burst in the town with the full effulgence of her wealth, her rank, her fashion, and her beauty; and return to those dreams of splendour and luxury, of pride, pomp, and place, from which she had turned aside in the momentary madness of a misguided passion.

She learnt the next day that Rokewood had already placed Lady Norah under the care of Squire Macray, and that there she was to await her death. She felt a desperate interest in the approaching destruction, she watched for news from the house, she held conference with Chippenham, she grew excited, eager, furious; she laid the plan of the pretended burglary; she told Chippenham where to search for the region of the heart, when he should find himself, knife in hand, by the side of the sleeping Norah.

Then all through those mad days of murderous plotting she searched eagerly for news of a mutilated body picked up on the Great Northern line; none such met her eyes, nor reached her ears.

The papers were wholly silent; could Hammond have escaped? There were moments when she hoped and desired most passionately that he had; she still craved his presence. Norah, once dead, she was mad enough to fancy that she might yet win him as her husband.

Meanwhile the days waned, and she had spoken no word of her mad love, of her desperate revenge, of her wild hope to Rokewood.

The two sat before the breakfast-table—watching alternately the falling of the snow and the glowing of the fire. Neither ate, neither spoke! Lady Monkhouse shivered in her Indian shawl. Something like the shadow of fear hovered over the guilty pair that morning as they sat waiting, wondering, expectant.

All at once Rokewood turned to her:

"It must be over, or have failed by now," he said, in a hoarse voice. "I wish that dolt Chippenham would come in and tell us the news; he may have been arrested. The servants may have heard the screams, and they would capture the felons, if possible. In that case Chippenham would betray us. I would never trust the fellow. Half-past nine"—he closed his large gold watch with a heavy snap. "He ought to be here. I tell you, Margaret, this business is killing me."

She laughed a dreary laugh.

"It is not amusing certainly," she said, "this playing with fire, and keen-edged tools; this tottering blindfold on the brink of a precipice. But without risk nothing can be accomplished. You should have made Diana drug her tea and the tea of the red-haired nurse; then there would have been no fear of screams."

At that instant the front bell boomed through the house.

"There is Chippenham," cried Rokewood, starting to his feet. "Chippenham, or—"

He did not finish the sentence; he thought out the whole gloomy thought to its end. But he did not speak.

Another moment and Chippenham, announced as "Mr. Anthony," was ushered into the breakfast-room.

Since the last night's fearful work, the man had burnt the murder-stained raiment at a fire kindled by himself and his comrade on the hill-side. The two had slept in the cowered of a mountain farm, where

they had concealed two suits of clothes. In one of these suits Anthony was dressed on this snowy morning. He had washed his face and hands at a pump in the farmer's yard; he had combed his rough hair and beard with a pocket-comb; he had drank brandy to keep up his courage. Clean enough and well-clad enough to have passed as a country miller, or respectable farmer, looked Anthony Chippenham.

His bad heart rose boldly at the sight of the lady and gentleman miscreants who had urged him on to crime and paved his blood-stained road with gold.

"Come in—come in, Chippenham," cried Rokewood; "come close—close to the fire. The morning is—cold."

Except where the demon of madness has entered into a human soul, that soul—bad, vile as it may be, shrinks from murder. The very word is repugnant to write in full, and Rokewood was not mad; he was simply a man, vile beyond the ordinary vileness of humanity; and though he wished Norah dead, although he would have paid hundreds of pounds to get this deed accomplished, yet he turned deadly ill while Chippenham recounted his crime.

They had entered the room, they had stabbed her to the heart while she lay sleeping, then they thought of the pond and dragged her down, through the house, to the room where the plate had been left for them, and where the windows opened into the shrubbery; they had taken the body to the pond, tied a stone to the heels and one to the neck, and flung it into the water.

"Well done," said the countess, and she clapped her hands.

Rokewood turned upon her savagely.

"Woman," he said, "your triumph disgusts me. It will do so more and more; not a day that I won't speak of this deed, whispered low in your ear! A stone did you say?"

Chippenham, miscreant as he was, shuddered and turned away.

"What of the—the other?" stammered Rokewood. "We came back. We had harder work with her; she fought like mad, struggled, would have screamed, but I put a handkerchief into her mouth."

Rokewood began to pace the room from end to end. "Of course," he said, "it could not be helped. If nobody but Norah was killed, suspicion might point our way, but now it is so plainly a robbery; the nurse would be so likely to raise an alarm."

He turned towards Chippenham.

"And what of Diana?"

"She's right enough," responded the murderer, with a stupid stare.

After a moment he burst out:

"I want another fifteen hundred for this job, my lady; it was dreadful work—it has unnerved me. I shall never be the man I was before last night."

"Another fifteen hundred!" screamed Rokewood, turning his ghastly face and burning eyes upon the man. "Are you beside yourself, then?"

"I must have been to have consented as I did to such a 'frightful thing.'" The man shuddered and glanced over his shoulder as he spoke. "Such a thing for a paltry five hundred, one thousand only between me and my comrade, its preposterous. Why, my lady, you take fifty thousand by this deed. You should not grudge the principal actors a paltry twenty-five hundred."

"You talk madly," said Rokewood. "You forget I must pay ten thousand out of it, to Squire Macray, and two thousand to Madame Diana."

"It's a shame," burst out the miscreant, with an oath, "that the squire is to get ten thousand for sitting in his chair and doing nothing, while I am to get only five hundred, for doing the deadliest work!"

Again the man shuddered.

"I tell you I must put broad seas between me and this place—broad, dashing seas, which may lash and dash and foam, and wash out the memory of this stain. The other night"—and he turned and faced the false countess—"the other night I could have pitched that young fellow down the precipice as coolly as if he had been a bale of blankets, and I could have slept after it as sound as the church; but he was bound and gagged; he did not struggle nor scream. Now these people, their cries and frantic groans will ring in my ears as long as I live."

"What man is that who was bound and gagged?" asked Rokewood, eagerly.

Chippenham paused in dismay. The man's memory, caution, and prudence seemed deserting him. He had betrayed the countess to the secretary.

She burst into a low, cruel laugh.

"Your caution deserves a golden recompense," she said. "It is likely, is it not, that I will give an extra fifteen hundred pounds to a person who has just betrayed me in such a way?"

"Well," cried Chippenham, in a hoarse, brutal voice, "if you don't, I'll just see whether the Government won't be more generous. I'll go and tell all to the magistrates of this county, see if I don't."

Rokewood walked up to the man, and put his hands upon his shoulders.

"You talk wisely, my friend. Do you think Government would give you two thousand pounds, and set you free, with the blood of two persons on your hands? If they set you free—free with a stain upon your name, with empty pockets, and a name accursed, you might think yourself lucky. Nay, be wise—be wise, Chippenham. What you said just now about broad seas to foam and dash, and wash out the memory of last night being placed between you and this county, all that was very, very wise. You will have five hundred pounds, your friend will have the like, and I will give you two hundred more unknown to him. More than this, I will not do. I have thousands and thousands to pay away out of the fortunes of these girls."

"And there's that other one," broke forth Chippenham. "I had little more than one hundred pounds for putting her in the French madhouse, calling her by your name, telling lies by the dozens. It's no use, Mr. Rokewood, you could never have got on at all without Tony Chippenham!"

He struck the end of an umbrella, which he had been vulgar enough to bring into the room, into the carpet viciously to give emphasis to his words.

"I'll take fifteen hundred extra. I'll take no less. I'll give you trouble. I'll start up when you least expect me. I'll worry your life out of you. I'll—I'll—I'll—"

"Hush!" said Rokewood, "hush! I am not to be intimidated in this fashion. I see no reason to dread you. Before you can hurt me you must put your own neck in the noose. You are not fool enough for that. Now, listen."

Rokewood walked to a small iron portable safe which he was in the habit of carrying about with him, and fastening up in the room where he sat. He drew a key from his pocket, opened the safe, and then came towards Chippenham, carrying the new, crisp, rustling bank-notes. "Here are twelve hundred pounds in notes, of one hundred pounds each. Now you have seven hundred of those for yourself. Was ever man so fortunate! Out of what I have already paid you you ought to have saved a great deal. Now go, be contented, be thankful, be patient, take some brandy, there is plenty on that sideboard, it will make you see with wiser eyes—it will show you how weak it is to threaten and bluster when you can do nothing."

The rustle of the crisp bank notes had a tempting sound. Chippenham took them into his hand, grumbling all the while. "It's a shame," he said, "a dreadful shame. As for you, madam," turning towards the false countess, "if your man had been smashed up by the engine we should have heard of it. Take my word for it, somebody rescued him, and he'll be entering an action against you some day, see if he don't," and with that Chippenham took his departure.

When the hall door had shut on him the countess turned to Rokewood.

"You were a fool not to pay him more, he will come back again."

"True he will come back again," responded Rokewood, with a grim smile, "and had I given him what he asked for he would still have come back again; can't you see Margaret that it is far more economical to deny the fellow what he asks for at first. I always knew a thousand pounds would never satisfy him. I meant all the while to make it two thousand, if he acquitted himself well, and he shall have eight hundred more before we ship him out to the other side of the world. Enough of him. And now, Margaret, to business. Having settled with him we must bethink us of the rest; the hundred thousand pounds are ours now. We shall only wait to have the body of this Norah identified, and then, with the burial certificate of Viola, we go to Messrs. Fairbold and compel them to disgorge. Camp, the parson, and Grindler and Clutch, the lawyers will take twenty thousand between them, Macray ten thousand, Diana a thousand, and Chippenham two thousand—thirty-two thousand; leaving only the fortune of one of the girls, and about eighteen thousand over."

"You shall have the fifty thousand," said Lady Monkhouse, "so you leave me in peace; it will be over two thousand a year pocket money, and then, living in splendour, carriages, everything at your command, you will, indeed, be fortunate."

"I shall require your ladyship to make it up to me the hundred thousand," said Rokewood, coolly. "I have had all the trouble in this affair of getting rid of the girls, therefore I take the sixty-eight thousand, and will kindly wait your convenience to make up the rest. Why, your income is eighty thousand a year."

"True, but I may marry."

"A prince?" sneered Rokewood.

"Or a poor, penniless young man of good family, upon whom I have set my heart," said Lady Monkhouse.

"Your heart, your heart!" cried Rokewood, bursting into a mocking laugh. "Margaret Elton's heart—ah, the man or woman who could find that might quite expect to square the circle or find the philosopher's stone."

"Well, uncle, you have helped me to get rid of the children of the man I hated. You have got rid of him, you have earned the money, you shall have the sixty-eight thousand, and I will help you to the remaining twenty-two thousand if you will help me to a husband!"

"All London will be at your feet when the season recommences."

"I do not want all London. I have set my wish on one man."

"A Cabinet minister—an English nobleman—a foreign prince?"

"Neither."

"Your ambition is preposterous. You can't aspire to one of the princes of the blood?"

"I only wish to marry a younger son, no favourite with his old crusty father, a young fellow with three hundred a year, which he holds at his old father's pleasure. I wish to marry the husband of the girl now lying in the pond at Glan Flodden."

Then she told him all her mad, preposterous passion, her deadly vengeance which she believed was frustrated, since she heard of nothing.

The secretary stared at her with uneasy eyes. The fact of Margaret loving a man for his own sake seemed so unnatural that Rokewood feared for her reason.

"I don't think the fellow will marry you," he said, "now especially; he will think you had some hand in his wife's death."

"Bring it about, bring it about, somehow," said Lady Monkhouse.

"We must set the father against him and reduce him to beggary," said Rokewood. "Then you might bribe him with wealth, but I will have your seal and bond for the hundred thousand pounds, lady."

In the day came the news of the terrible murders and the robberies at Glan Flodden. It was the old butler and the housekeeper who arrived through the snow in a carriage.

The countess and Rokewood acted their parts to perfection; expressed horror, grief, dismay. There was that in the story which puzzled them, however, as the reader will naturally surmise.

"Ah, my lady," said the butler; "I never shall forget what I felt this morning. I was awakened by the housemaid rushing into my room as white as a ghost. 'Ah, sir,' she said; 'I can't tell you, I can't tell you what has happened,' and then she sank upon a chair crying and sobbing, ready to break her heart. Then out it came. The stairs, the passages, the hall were stained with blood—the grim witness to crime, my lady, reached down from the room where the poor, dear, pretty young lady slept. Ah, I can't help thinking it was cruel to shut her up there just because she wanted to marry a man to her mind."

"Get on, get on," thundered Rokewood, while the old man was weeping.

"Well, sir," he said; "upstairs the one bed was empty, but the other was soaked through and through, as though somebody had been stabbed to the heart. In the nurse's room the stains were on the floor, which showed there had been double murder. The window was open at the top, and a ladder rested against it; that was how they got in. Then downstairs the lock of the squire's strong room was picked; odd, he never heard them; and all the silver cups, the boxes of madam's jewels, her gold sets, her pink topaz set, her amethyst set, all taken, and lots of old-fashioned seals and rings. But you have not heard the worst; the trace of blood led down to the pond. We have had it dragged; already the fishes have eaten off the faces—horrible, horrible!"

The old man covered his eyes with his hands and sobbed. The housekeeper sobbed likewise.

"There must have been three killed," said the housekeeper. "Madame Diana is missing."

Rokewood turned yet more livid in his pallor.

"Madame Diana," he said.

"Yes, three are missing. We can't identify one body from another. The squire is like a madman."

"This grows frightfully complex," muttered Rokewood. "Madame Diana missing, did you say?"

#### CHAPTER XXXVII.

But anxious cares the pensive squire oppress,  
Sleep fled his eyes, and peace forsook his breast.  
The raging flames that in his bosom dwell  
He wanted art to hide and means to tell. Pope.

"MADAME DIANA missing!" cried Lady Monkhouse, "impossible!"

She bit her lip when the last word had escaped her unguarded, incautious, rash lips. She felt herself white. She turned round modestly to hide her flushed and shame-stricken face, and to gaze morosely into the fire.



Rokewood could have crushed her for the incautious word, but his wits were about him. He stared boldly into the honest, wrinkled, distressed face of the old butler. He turned a glance, stoical and calm, upon the face of the housekeeper, scared now out of its usual placidity and content.

"I'm sure it's a mercy the missis and Miss Matilda are away," said the good dame; "they might have been murdered too; and what a mercy we all escaped."

"Three men-servants, sir, in the house," said the butler, addressing Rokewood; "three, and not one to be aroused—not one to be able to move a hand in the defence of that sweet young lady and those two poor women; but we all sleep at such a distance from those rooms, and Glan Flodden is such an enormous place, such wide passages divide one part from another. It seems the rascals were sharp and cunning enough to know what side of the house to attack. London thieves, I'll warrant them!"

"Aye, London thieves, without doubt," said Rokewood, hastily. "We must set the county police on their track, not that it would be of much use, though the London detectives are the—are the—people."

He hesitated as he pronounced the name of those officers of the law, whom his vile practices had taught him to dread.

"I have written up to Scotland Yard already, myself," said the butler.

"You have, you have!" cried Rokewood, in a savage tone, turning round upon the unnerved and agitated old man; "and by what authority, sir? You should have left it for your superiors to arrange all that. You have not sent the letter, I suppose. Give it to me at once."

"I have sent the letter," responded the old butler, doggedly. "It's at Penniston by this time."

Rokewood took another rapid stride up the room.

"Poor Norah—poor dear child!" he said, constraining himself to speak of the hapless orphan as it was expected that he should speak.

Lady Monkhouse took her cue from him; she put her cambric lace-bordered handkerchief to her eyes, and sobbed out:

"Poor, dear child! I was just beginning to love her and understand her."

"Ah, you would have had a great affection for her," cried Rokewood. "I always told you you did not understand Norah."

"The parson is up at Glan Flodden," said the butler, "trying to comfort the master. He does take on so, he says such dreadful things, just as if he was going mad."

"Your master is always mad with drink, and unconscious of what he talks about; it is nonsense for the rector to waste time with him when there are so many things to see about, the detectives to be communicated with, and so on. Now I must hurry on to Glan Flodden, examine the premises, and so on."

"The police are there already," observed the housekeeper, wiping her eyes.

For a moment Rokewood shuddered; his guilty soul recoiled from the idea of trusting himself in that murder-stained mansion with the frightened servants, the suspicious policemen, the excited squire, the long-winded rector, and, perchance, the sharp-witted little doctor of Yauworth, who had attended Lady Norah in her illness, had heard the sad story from her own lips, and largely sympathised with her sufferings.

A very few moments' reflection, however, showed the keen-witted secretary that there was no course wiser than putting a bold face on the matter, and, if possible, pointing the black finger of suspicion in another quarter. He would go on to Glan Flodden, sigh, groan, weep with the best of them. He had more self-command than the mocking Margaret, his niece, and he told her peremptorily to remain at Cumberland, when she expressed a wish to accompany him to Glan Flodden.

There was something in his tone of authority which startled, if it did not subdue, the bad, bold woman, and she suffered him to depart with the two upper servants in the carriage, for Glan Flodden.

Arrived at the large, gloomy mansion, Rokewood got out of the carriage and ascended the stone terrace steps with the air of a man in deep sorrow and perplexity, to whom the signs of the times were an overwhelming and alarming study. He entered the hall, and took off his hat with an air of the deepest respect.

Squire Macray sat in an arm-chair before the fireplace. The rector stood by his side. The heart of the evil secretary sank at sight of the two men. He called all his fortitude to his aid, for he felt need of that and of caution the most profound, at this trying moment.

The squire looked up at him, and a scowl contracted his brow. A wonderful change had come over the countenance of the red-faced, country gen-

tleman. He looked livid, and there were dark circles around his eyes.

"I wish," he burst forth, loudly; "how I wish it had never happened. I wish I had never seen him," pointing to Rokewood.

"What is it that ails Mr. Macray?" asked Rokewood, in a bland voice of courtesy.

"You have heard, sir, surely, of the fearful tragedy of last night?" replied the rector, in a mild voice of surprise. "Three bodies found in the pond, already so mutilated by the voracious pikes that recognition is impossible. The doctor, indeed, says he can only discover the remains of two bodies, but, of course, we must have the best medical evidence from London, the third party may have sunk in the mud, or have been entirely devoured by the pikes."

"And has her body, dear Lady Norah—poor, mistaken child, whom I so very tenderly loved—has her body been—been identified?" asked Rokewood.

"No. The long, black hair of the French lady, and the long, red hair of the unhappy nurse, still attached to the skulls, point out two of the victims. There are other limbs which may be those of the young lady, but it is not known. The doctor has looked up all those ghastly evidences of crime in a cellar beneath the house."

"Hold your peace, hold, hold your peace, parson," wailed Squire Macray. "Why, why, when you preached at me Sunday after Sunday down in the church at Yauworth village, why did you never warn me against murder, eh?"

"He is very much intoxicated," whispered Rokewood to the rector.

"Indeed, they tell me he has drank nothing but coffee since last night," responded that gentleman, into whose mind something like the shadow of suspicion was creeping, now that he saw the guilt-stricken face of the squire and when he remembered Norah's piteous tale, to which he had turned a deaf ear at the village inn.

"He is always drunk," said Mr. Rokewood, pompously. "It would not in the very least surprise me now to hear him accuse himself of these murders, or—or me, or even you, reverend sir," and Rokewood laughed a weak, wretched laugh.

But the rector gave no answering smile.

"I will be very plain with you, Mr. Rokewood," quoth the good man. "I think, under the circumstances, Lady Norah being detained a prisoner here by your wish, and so large a property descending to your niece in case of her death, and the complaints she lodged against you on every opportunity which presented itself, I think, I repeat that all these circumstances taken in conjunction with the sudden death of the other sister, and Mrs. Macray and her daughter being sent out of the way, and this entrance in the night, made, certainly, by persons who must have known something of the house—"

The good man paused as though he had lost the thread of his argument; Rokewood, pale as a ghost, but perfectly self-possessed and smiling.

"Well, sir, well," he said, "whither does all this tend? I am dying with anxiety to know. Do you insinuate that I climbed in by the window in the night and committed all the murders. I assure you I can prove an *alibi* if it be necessary."

"Heaven forbid, Mr. Rokewood," said the rector, closing his eyes, "that I should insinuate anything so dreadful."

(To be continued.)

## TRUE LOVE AND FALSE.

### CHAPTER XII.

"You shall not call me dear," said Grace. "I am nothing to you; I never will be. If you would go your way and let me go mine, I would be thankful. There are rooms enough in this house. We need not always sit staring at each other. The sight of you is hateful to me."

"Is that true?" Seth asked.

"Yes," she said. "I hate you and myself when we are together. I am miserably ashamed of myself and of you. It never can be otherwise, never."

"And you would be happier if I were dead?" he asked.

"What folly!" she answered. "I hope I shall be dead soon; but if I live a hundred years, I will never alter my behaviour to you. The more you do to make me like you the more I hate you."

Seth had knelt beside his wife as he spoke. Now he took her hand before she could refuse it and kissed it softly. Then he arose and went away.

Grace retired an hour afterwards; all night long her pillow was wet with her tears, and in the morning she slept late. When she descended to the dining-room, Seth was not there, and the girl, with a frightened, nervous manner, kept coming to the door, and looking at her as though she had something on her mind. At last she said:

"I don't want to frighten you, ma'am, but master was not in last night."

"Not in!" said Grace.

"No, ma'am," said the girl. "I'm frightened. The last thing I heard him say was, 'I'm going to bathe, Ann.' I don't believe he came in again after that, ma'am."

Grace turned faint and sick; she started to her feet and ran all over the house looking in vain for Seth. He certainly was not there. Then, followed by the servant, she hurried riverward. There, at the bathing place to which Seth always resorted, she saw something that made her very heart stand still.

All his garments piled carefully on a great rock. When she touched them she found that they were soaked with dew. Seth had come here the night before to bathe, and had been drowned. Grace threw herself upon the ground and sobbed bitterly. All the kindness the poor fellow had tried to show her—all his gentle looks and words, gave her just so many twinges of remorse.

"Oh, Seth! Seth!" she cried. "Come back, and I will love you! I will be kind to you! I will be your true and loving wife! Dear Seth! poor Seth!"

But all her words were in vain. Only when she lifted her head that little pile of clothes seemed to make a mute answer.

"Never, never more!" they said, in their voiceless way. "Never, never! You might have given love for love, and kindness for kindness. You might have made him happy. Not now—not now!"

The news that Seth Atherton was drowned spread like wildfire over the village. The old parents heard it first, then the clergyman and his good wife, and before long Grace had friends about her who did their best to console one on whom they supposed a terrible calamity had fallen. Perhaps if Grace had really been a tender and loving wife she could not for the time, have suffered more.

Could Seth have returned to life at that moment, there would have been no more of that strange life, but mutual kindness and affection instead. What was done, however, was done, and there was no undoing it. Men dragged the river, and wandered along its banks, looked for some token of the drowned man's whereabouts. Everyone did something in the staring and talking line, under the impression that they were offering efficient aid. Some, more hopeful than the rest, ventured their belief that he might be living yet. But the river emptied itself, not many miles away, into the sea, and the general opinion was that it had swept away the body with it during the night.

Grace could not divest herself of the terrible thought that Seth had committed suicide. If that could have been driven away, she could have hoped for peace, but it would remain.

She refused to leave the little cottage, and kept wandering through its rooms, wringing her hands and weeping. Every now and then something reminded her of Seth and of his kindness. There lay the shawl he had brought to her, because she had given just one little shiver. There were the flowers he had gathered for her, and here the pineapple so daintily sliced to tempt her appetite. Never again would those soft dark eyes look into hers, never would the kind mouth smile so tenderly upon her again.

If ever she should see that face the eyes would be sightless, the mouth of stone. The heart, the fond heart she had pained so cruelly, would be at rest.

"What was my pride, that I should think so much of it?" she asked herself vainly. "Why could I not forget myself a while? He was better than Adolph—truer, handsomer. Fate sent him to me, and I—I have killed him. Had I been kind to him he might stand here now, happy, and full of life and health, warm, rosy, and glowing, instead of floating, a cold, frozen corpse, along that horrible river—that horrible river!"

And Grace, in her agony, wrung her hands and tore her hair, and wept such tears as she had never shed before.

They had brought the garments home, and in her fear of suicide she examined them carefully. Some letter to herself might have been written, some line of reproach, perhaps some long farewell. She found, indeed, a little folded paper with her name upon it. It read thus:

"Something tells me that we shall shortly part. I know that it must be. When I am gone perhaps you, whom I have loved so—loved as I never thought to love any woman—will read this. It is not my nature to be patient and humble, but you know that I have been so to you. You know that I have striven to win your heart day by day, and hour by hour; you know how uselessly, how vainly. Your pride shuts you against me, and you despise me. No wonder. Yet, had I been mad, and had you known

it, you would have pitied me. It was only madness that led me on in those days of which you know—nothing more; and you will not pity or forgive me. Sometimes I have seen your face soften, and have thought, 'at last I have won her.' But always the scorn returned, the hate, the repulsion; at least you have told me so, in every way. I know that my presence is hateful to you, that my very life is a burden on your own. Were you free of me you would be happy. I desire your happiness before all else. Do not think that I will take my own life. I never will, I promise you, and I desire to meet you in heaven; but I believe that the time is fast approaching which will part us for ever. When it comes, and you read these lines, read them pitifully. I loved you—oh, how I loved you!—with my very soul. Had you loved me earth would have been Paradise; but you did not. You hurt me. You could not help it. It was not your fault, but mine. I was worthy of it. Adieu, adieu. Could I but bid adieu as lovers may; could I clasp you once more to this fond heart of mine, feel one loving kiss upon my lips, know that but for one moment you loved me, though that were the moment of my death!

"You hate me for saying this. You tear the paper, perhaps, and cast it from you, scorning even the lines this hated hand has written. Yet all the same. Remember that I loved you; that in the other world, to which, when you read this, I shall be gone, I keep that love to greet you with when—oh, may God grant it! you join me there."

"Adieu, my wife, yet not my wife. My love, who loves me not. "Your unhappy SETH."

Cast the paper from her. Ah no! Grace pressed it to her lips, and showered kisses upon it.

"I am his murderer!" she cried. "Ah, Seth, I shall never know a happy day again. You are revenged for all my cruelty. I love you, now that love can but bring me misery. I will love you until I die, my husband, my husband, my husband!"

With these words Grace sank down upon the floor, where, long after, they found her, crushing the precious paper to her heart and moaning bitterly.

That night Grace told her parents all—the mystery no longer. All three kept it secret. And Grace went home to her father's house again, and put on widow's mourning, to wear, as she said, all her life. The little house was let to strangers, the furniture all sold, except a few things, which were kept from their associations to Poor Grace. Had they been the fondest lovers in the world, she could not have cherished Seth's memory more tenderly.

But his body was never found, never would be now; for, as those who knew the most of such things said, the river had floated it away seaward double-s, long before the man was even missed. For a while the village was astir with the talk and conjecture and sympathy which such an occurrence was calculated to awaken; but by and by all that was over, and that eventless monotony which often follows fast on sorrow's heels settled down on Grace's life. She sat alone almost all the time in her little room. She did not care for anything. Sometimes she thought how, could Seth come to life again, she might make his home an earthly paradise. At other times she wondered at her own story, as though it had been told of another. And always there seemed no future to her—nothing beyond, save the grave. After that perhaps she might meet Seth. But Grace was only mortal. That strange, blood-curdling mystery of eternity—that meeting of spirit with spirit, naked of its flesh, scarcely comforted her. Warm kisses from warm lips, heart beating against heart, human love and human hope are what youth craves in its passionate yearnings. Amidst coral and sea-sand slept the form she would have encircled with her arms, or long ago, with all "sea change" upon it, had been swept with seaweed and white shells upon some far-off land. She was alone for evermore—alone! alone alone! All that his patient life of loving tenderness had not won, Seth's death had gained for him. Day by day she grew fonder; day by day she wasted away. Her cheeks grew hollow, her colour faded, save when two hectic spots burnt under either eye. She went nowhere save to church, and then, shrouded in her widow's veil, no mortal saw her face. So the weeks passed on—the days, the years. Farmer Garrick had, under promise of secrecy, told old Bartholmæ of the truth, and he had come to see Grace at once. She startled him with her altered looks, and more with her altered manner. She looked him steadfastly in the eyes, and said calmly, "Yes, I did love Adolph once. I believe he almost broke my heart, and drove me mad. But now I love no one but my poor lost husband—no one on earth. As for Adolph, I forgive him freely."

"But I never will," said the old man; and tears were in his eyes. And after this they were all friends once more. But the old happiness was not to return. Troubles come in flocks, as the swallows do.

One day old farmer Garrick, having some cattle to dispose of, drove them to market, and sold them for a good price. He was seen to button the sum up in his pocket, and to drink a glass of ale at the "Drovers' Rest." After that no more was heard of him. He did not return at night to his anxious wife and daughter, and in the morning they set out in search of him. For days they received no tidings; but at last, in a lonely place through which he was obliged to pass on his return home, a body was found, only half concealed by sand and soda, which was recognised as his. He had been shot in the head from behind. And a countryman gave evidence that, on the night of his disappearance, he had seen a bad looking fellow, with a crutch lying beside him, sitting in that very spot. That he was sure that he concealed a pistol in his coat as he passed, and that he seemed to be waiting for some one.

It was plain to all who knew the story of the crippled robber, that it was to him that Garrick owed his death. But the man was not to be found; probably he had left the country. And after the funeral was over, nothing remained to Grace and her mother but to carry their new grief patiently about with them, and bear it as well as they could.

Mrs. Garrick would not keep the farm. The toil and thought required in its superintendence were too much for her. She sold it, out and out, stock and all, and then, advised by her lawyer, put her money into certain stocks, of which she knew nothing except that she had been told that they were safe, and sure to rise. Somehow the poor woman never understood anything more about it; somehow the "sure investment" proved a terrible failure. They came to her at last, and told her that she was penniless. She had cast away a fine fortune in the maddest manner; that she saw when it was too late to remedy the folly.

But Mrs. Garrick never said much about this sudden blow; she bent her head to it, and bore it as well as she could; but her power of endurance was very slight by this time, and she hardly lifted her head from the pillow after it fell upon her, until the day of her death. She pined away slowly, having no definite complaint, unless, indeed, there really be such a thing as a broken heart; and when she died, no one knew just where sleep merged into death. Her last words had been, "Poor Grace! I have ruined her."

Old Bartholmæ came to the house of mourning, as soon as the news reached him. He was very kind to Grace, as he had been since the truth had been told to him.

"Come with me," he said, "when all is over, and be as much of a daughter as you can be to me. We are both alone in the world now."

And so, two days after the funeral, Grace found herself at the handsome house, installed therein just as a daughter might have been. The old servants were cheerful in their welcome of her, and the presence of the dignified old housekeeper made it proper that she should remain there. Everybody considered it a matter of course that she should do so. And the intention of departing, as soon as she should have arrived at some definite resolution as to her future, was soon abandoned by the unhappy Grace. She saw that she was needed by the old man. He was falling fast. Day by day he grew weaker in body—day by day his hold on life was slipping from him. At last he kept his own room altogether.

"Don't leave me quite alone, Gracie," he whispered often. "You are all I have now—all, all."

And Grace promised to remain with him until he no longer needed her.

"That will never be while I live," the old man said. "Never, Grace, never!"

Those were changeless, quiet days that followed. Once fairly an invalid, the old man grew neither worse nor better for a long while. Grace read to him and sang to him, and talked when talking pleased him. When he wished to be alone, she sat with the housekeeper, who could talk enough for two.

One winter evening she sat thus, when the woman suddenly propounded a question which startled Grace considerably.

"When all is over, ma'am, what will you do, may I ask?"

"You mean," began Grace—

"We all know the poor old gentleman must go," said Mrs. Benson; "and then, ma'am—"

"I can be a governess, I presume," said Grace.

"A governess!" cried Mrs. Benson. "Oh, ma'am, as if you didn't know what we all know, that you'll have everything! What I meant was, will you stay here or go to London? I'd like, if you kept house anywhere, to stay with you, and I've thought a deal about it. It would be breaking up for me, you know, to have to go, and I'd rather be prepared."

"It is not as you suppose. At least Mr. Barthol-

mæ has never said anything about it," said Grace. "You know he has a son."

"Oh, Mrs. Atherton!" cried the housekeeper, "to think you shouldn't know! He's disinherited, for sure. I have proof. Now, seeing it's what it is, you'll not betray me if I tell, will you? Listening I am far above, I hope, as a general thing; but, Mrs. Atherton, once I did listen, that I confess."

Grace looked at her anxiously. The woman without curiosity remains unborn.

"About the time of your wedding, ma'am," said the housekeeper, "master was in a dreadful state of mind. He didn't like the trick you and Mr. Adolph played on everybody. There, ma'am, I'm sorry to have put you in mind of the departed, but I was obliged to mention it. It was in your very honeymoon moon that he was at his ragingest, I do suppose. What a wreck he is now, to be sure, and so strong and well such a little while ago!"

"I thought he was losing his senses, and I kept an eye upon him. So, one day being in the long closet off the library, I saw him, through the crack, take out of the place where I know it's kept, the will that gave everything to Master Adolph—as we know, me and cook, for we had witnessed it—quite family-like, you see—and tear it into shinders; yes, and burn it, ma'am, a muttering to himself all the while: 'Let him starve with his dancing girl, if he likes; not a penny of mine shall he have, not a penny.' I knew the will, ma'am, and I wasn't mistaken, that I am sure of."

"Well, then, ma'am, I could have cried, for I always liked Master Adolph; and I felt almost tempted to go out and fall down upon my bended knees, and beg and pray master to make it over—as he could, being a lawyer, all of his own head, you know—but I daren't, I was too afraid of him. Besides, he might have given me warning, and that I couldn't have lived through. I waited and said nothing, but the drawer where the will used to be was empty, the key in it, and no care took of it no more, and I always felt a shudder come over me when I looked at it. Something like the feelings you have, ma'am, when you expect to see a ghost, and don't—at least, I never didn't—at the end of a long passage, or going past a graveyard."

"That proves that Mr. Bartholmæ destroyed one will, but not that he made another," said Grace.

"Yes; but just hear me out, ma'am, and you'll know more," said the old housekeeper. "You remember the day that you went to London about a month after master took to his bed for good. You thought it kind o' singular, I know, that he should insist on your going yourself to town, and not sending a servant. There was a plan in it. You had at more than got in the train when he comes to the door but lawyer Larcomb. Master has him up to his room, and the door was shut; and then, ma'am, was the time I listened. The other wasn't no particular listening—it happened; but then I actually put my ear to the key-hole and heard every word. Says he—master I mean:

"'Larcomb, you must do what I might have done for myself once. I'm going fast, I know, and I want my will made. I've destroyed the first one.' And then he burst out about Master Adolph, strong and loud as ever, though he laid there on his back, hardly able to lift his head. 'I leave him nothing but my hearty curse,' he said, 'nothing else. May that weigh upon his very soul.'"

"Then Lawyer Larcomb seemed to expostulate, but pretty soon the will was made. I heard the pen scratch over the paper, and then master says loud, again:

"'Every penny to Grace Atherton. She has been a daughter to me.'"

"After that they had the man out of Mr. Larcomb's gig and the gardener up to witness, and Mr. Larcomb had lunch and port wine by himself in the dining-room and went away."

"Then you come back he didn't tell you, and I daren't. I wasn't so pleased as I am now about it, to tell the truth; but the will is in the old drawer, and the key hangs about master's neck night and day. You've noticed that many a time. And you are an heiress, ma'am, as well you deserve to be. And I've been wondering whether you'd be willing to settle down here, young and good-looking as you are, ma'am, in such a dull, out of the way country place?"

"I do not know—I could not say," said Grace, musingly. "If you are right, perhaps I should stay here, but you may be mistaken, and—I trust that our dear old friend may recover, and live for years."

"Amen," said Mrs. Benson, "but there's no hope of that, ma'am; I know the signs too well. His troubles here are nearly over."

Grace and the housekeeper divided the task of watching all night between them. To-day it was Grace's turn to rest. Mrs. Benson went to her place in the sick-room, and Grace was left at liberty to retire, if she chose to do so. But though fatigued, she was not sleepy; she was feverish and restless, and



the fresh outer air was what she longed for. She flung a shawl over her head, and going softly out into the garden, paced up and down the long walks, thinking sadly—thinking of all her woes, as we must at times, whether we will or no, but most of all with Seth—Seth, for whom her love grew stronger every day amidst the hopelessness of their eternal parting.

The moon fell over her pale face, paler still in contrast with her mourning robes. She looked almost like a spirit—at least, so thought a woman who leaned over the garden gate. She watched Grace with a sort of fear in her face, and at last called, softly:

"Madam—if you please, madam!"

Grace turned. The voice was very sweet, the intonation lady-like, the accent foreign. She stood still a moment, only looking, not advancing. The woman spoke again:

"Madam, if you please, are you the housekeeper, Mrs. Benson?"

"I am not," said Grace. "Do you wish to see her?"

The woman made no answer. She seemed to muse a moment.

"Please tell me," she said, after a pause; "is it true, then? Is Mr. Bartholmæ so ill—dying? Please, is it true?"

"He is very, very ill," said Grace.

"And you think he will die?" asked the woman.

"We fear so," said Grace.

"Come closer, please," said the woman. "Do not be afraid. I am a lady, and alone. You are not a gardener, I know that could not be—you are not a servant?"

"No," said Grace. "I am a friend of Mr. Bartholmæ's, and am here to help nurse him."

"Yes; a thousand pounds," said the woman. "I asked because it is dark. One cannot see well in these tree shadows, and every servant has his orders. You are a lady. You will help me? You will give a letter to Mr. Bartholmæ?"

"I will, if I dare," said Grace; "but it might be dangerous to agitate him."

"Yes, yes," said the Frenchwoman, "yes; but can a prayer, a petit on agitate? Oh, please you take it—please you give it. Twice has the door-yarder been shut in my face, and he must not die without seeing this—that old man. Ah, give it, please you."

"From whom is this letter?" asked Grace.

"From Adolph Bartholmæ, that old man's son, and my husband," said the woman. "Ah, only he is turned from the door—only his letters are refused. You will take it; oh, you will."

"Yes, I will," said Grace, holding out her hand for the letter, and trying, in the faint light the moon flung through the tree branches, to see the face of Adolph's wife. She was not jealous of her now. She had no longer any love for Adolph; but a pang pierced her heart nevertheless, at the remembrance of her past pain.

"It is kind of you—it is good of you," said the Frenchwoman. "If once he can read that letter, that unjust old man, his heart will soften. Oh, he has suffered so—my Adolph! But perhaps you do not know. The old man dying now up there," and she pointed to the window where a light burnt, "is very wicked. The saints have mercy on his soul, and soften him before he dies. He cares not if his son begs in the street for bread. He cares not if he dies, and all because he loved me instead of a girl cold as ice, loveless as a ghost, to whom he would have married him."

Grace drew back from the gate a little.

"Mr. Bartholmæ shall have the letter," she said. "Probably he does not know that his son is in any difficulty."

"Ah, yes; he knows," said the woman, "he knows well. Adolph came once, then he grew proud. 'I die before I supplicate again,' he said. He taught music—he, a gentleman, and once so rich; for that he cared not, nor I. We lived together happily, and our boy, until poor Adolph fell ill. He can teach no more. He suffers for many things. I, alas! I leave him to dance, but it is that we may not starve. Oh, if you could see our poor home! If you could see Adolph! If you could see my breaking heart, madam, you would help me if you could!"

"I will deliver the letter," said Grace. "I will see that he reads it, or read it to him myself. I can do no more."

She shrunk away from the beautiful French woman as she spoke, for the second time feeling an unaccountable dislike to her, though the pangs of jealousy were past.

"I must go in," she said. "Good night. Mr. Bartholmæ shall read his son's letter—if he lives until to-morrow."

"You are kind, madam," said the Frenchwoman. "Surely on his death-bed he will relent. I go to pray for it. Adieu."

And, with a little courtesy, she turned from the gate and hurried away. Grace slipped into the house

and went to bed, keeping the letter about her person. Old Bartholmæ should have the letter, she resolved, if he retained the power of understanding when the day broke.

She slept at last, but awoke in the gray dawn. Her first thought was of the letter. When Mrs. Benson resigned her watch, she entered the sick-room firm in her intention of giving the old man every inducement and excuse for a late forgiveness of Adolph. As for his money, she did not wish for that; she had never calculated upon it for a moment. In some way she could earn her bread doubtless, as she would have earned it had she not yielded to the old man's desire, and been for a while a daughter to him. Adolph had insulted and deceived her, but she desired no mean revenge, such as the wrenching of his heritage from him might be supposed to be.

"She watched for a fitting opportunity, and when it came she broached the subject."

"Mr. Bartholmæ," she said, "I have a letter here that I have been desired to read to you. May I?"

"Yes, yes," he answered. "Whose letter is it?"

"It is written by a poor person," she said. "One who is ill and suffering. His wife and child wait for bread."

"Oh, a begging letter," said the old man. "Well, well, if the writer is a worthy man, I'll assist him."

"I know you would," said Grace; "but this man is not faultless—none of us are. Perhaps he is paying the penalty for his misdeeds. Some years ago he married against his father's will, and—"

The old man started up in his bed, and stretched his attenuated hand towards Grace.

"The letter is from my son," he cried. "Did he make you the ambassador?"

"His wife gave it to me; she did not know me," said Grace.

"His wife!—the dancer!" cried the old man. "I bade them send her from the door; who disobeyed me?"

"I," said Grace; "no one else. Please let me read the letter?"

"I will read it myself," said the old man. "Here, give it to me?"

He seized it from Grace's hand, and cast his eye over it.

"He says that they are starving!" he said; "that he is very ill. Why does he tell me that? I am no longer his father; he no longer my son."

"It is true, I know," said Grace; "and though he has angered you, you are his father still."

"You plead his cause?" cried Bartholmæ; "you—well, women are strange creatures. No, no, Grace. I am not the man to repent of my life-long resolution because I am on my death-bed. He hopes to be forgiven now, that he may step into my shoes when I am gone. Grace, listen to me. I have made my will. You are my heiress. You may do what you choose with everything that I possess, but he shall have nothing except my curse. Nothing as my son, but as a beggar—as a beggar—I care nothing more for him, I will send him ten pounds. Put that sum in an envelope, and tell him what I tell you. Do it, girl, do it. It will be a revenge for you."

"I cannot do it," said Grace; "I cannot send him such a message."

"You love him still, then?" cried old Bartholmæ.

"I care nothing for him," said Grace. "I despise him, when I think of his weakness, but I neither hate nor love him. Only I do not want, and will not have money that he must think his by right, if unhappily you are called from us."

Old Bartholmæ laughed.

"I am a good lawyer," he said. "My will is written so that only you and your heirs may derive advantage from it. I leave Adolph a beggar. Bah!—if it were wrong I should be as wicked living as dead. I will not relent."

And then he ceased and lay silent, and Grace in vain implored him to relent—no words could move him.

"You think it is your duty to say all this," were the words he stopped her speech with at last. "I respect you, and I am not angry at you for saying them, in consequence, but they only trouble and disturb me; they cannot move me, and I am too weak to listen any longer."

So Grace left him. She enclosed the sum of money he had mentioned in an envelope to Adolph's address, but sent no message with it. Her own resolution was taken in secret, but after this she said not one word on the subject; indeed, she could not have done so with any propriety, for old Bartholmæ grew rapidly worse from that very day, and died as the sun went down upon the still Sabbath afternoon.

Then, for a while, Grace could only grieve for him, he had been so kind a friend to her. And now she had no one, no one in all the world, to care for or protect her.

## CHAPTER XIII.

EARLY on the morning of the funeral, Adolph Bartholmæ entered the door of his late father's mansion with the air of its master, and walked, without speaking to anyone, into the darkened parlours.

He looked wretchedly ill and feeble. Lines long years should not have traced upon the smooth brow, cheek, and polished forehead, were carved there now. The whole expression of his face was morose and moody; at the first glance one would scarcely have recognised him.

The housekeeper hurried to greet him at once, as soon as she heard of his presence. She was very fond of him, and the tears filled her eyes as she looked at him.

"I'm glad you've come Master Adolph," she said. "You look far from well. Let me bring you a glass of wine and a bit of something."

"The wine if you please," said Adolph, "but nothing else. I am ill Mrs. Benson, I ought not to be out of bed, but I could not afford to neglect my own interests. Love and respect, and all that, would not have brought me here, I can tell you. I owe neither to my father, but I am his only son, and I'll have the property. I'll have it I say! It's my right, or it should be, if laws were what they ought to be, no matter what ridiculous will the old man made in his mad anger. What has he done Mrs. Benson? Do you know."

"What he has done won't please you Master Adolph," said the housekeeper. "Oh, what did you fall out with him for? Sir, you might have known what it would come to. Excuse me sir, but it's because I'm so much your friend, in my poor way, that I speak out so. Why didn't you give in to him a bit, or manage him somehow?"

"Manage him," sneered Adolph. "He was harder than a stone, more cruel than a wild beast; he had neither mercy nor compassion."

"Hush, hush, Master Adolph, he's dead and gone now," said the housekeeper.

"Death don't alter the truth," said Adolph. "He has been cruel to me. He knew I was starving, and he, rolling in gold, refused to help me. Did he get the last letter? Did he read it—the one my wife brought?"

"I never heard of any letter—that is, lately," said the housekeeper.

"What other woman is in the house?" asked Adolph. "Maunette—my wife, I mean—told me that she saw a woman here, tall, fair, and very much the lady, who promised to give the letter to my father with her own hands. Who was it, Mrs. Benson?"

The housekeeper started.

"When was that?" she asked.

"Only a week ago," said Adolph. "She came down to try to see my father, but the servants had their orders, they turned her from the door. Then she watched about the house at night, hoping to see you, and saw, she says, a lady who was very kind. Who was it?"

"Don't you know who is here?" asked Mrs. Benson.

"No," said Adolph.

"Mrs. Atherton—Grace Garrick that was," cried the housekeeper. "Your wife must have seen her."

"Good heavens!" cried Adolph.

"You knew she was a widow?" asked Mrs. Benson.

"No," said Adolph.

"She is one," said the housekeeper. "Her husband was drowned, and her mother and father are dead, and all her money gone somewhere, and your father made her come here. She's been kind and good to him; but no doubt she had her motives for kindness. Oh, Master Adolph; I'm afraid it was no use your coming down here. I know the poor old gentleman made a new will, and I believe he has left everything to her."

"I'll contest it, then," muttered Adolph. "And her husband is dead, eh? Were they happy? What kind of man was he? How did she keep him out of sight so long? How shy she was, with that open, candid way of hers!"

And Adolph forgot his own deceit in remembering how, as he thought, Grace had intended to jilt him all the time.

The housekeeper stared at Adolph in amazement. At another moment she would have questioned him without remorse, but the sad event which had brought the son to her father's mansion had subdued her for the time. Moreover, she thought it best not to talk too much of Grace and her affairs until everything was settled.

She stood quietly folding her hands together, and waiting for Adolph to say more.

"She would be more forgiving and more self-sacrificing than women are born to be, if she had given him the letter," he muttered.

And at that very moment the door opened, and Grace Atherton entered. She looked towards him



[THE LETTER.]

without recognising him at first; then a flush overspread her face, and she drew back towards the door.

"It's Mr. Adolph," said the housekeeper, and Grace bowed, and all three remained silent for a few moments.

Then the housekeeper slipped out of the room, thinking it best not to be present at any interview between these two, who seemed to her to be by no means friendly to each other.

Adolph broke the silence first:

"Madam," he began, "may I ask you a few questions?"

Grace bowed.

"You were with my father when he died?"

"Yes," said Grace.

"Did he speak of me in his last moments?"

"At the very last, he said nothing."

"But during the last days of his life he must have spoken of me, surely."

Grace shook her head. Adolph grew paler than before.

"It was you, I believe—I think it must have been you, who met my wife—who received my letter," he faltered.

Grace bowed.

"You gave it to him?" asked Adolph.

"I did."

"And he read it?"

"Yes."

"Did it soften him?" asked Adolph. "Nay, do not look so scornfully at me. I must put sentiment aside, and think of the main chance. We are on the verge of starvation—my wife, my child, and I. I am anxious to know how matters stand."

"A few hours will give you the privilege of discovering the truth for yourself," said Grace, coldly. "I can afford you no information."

"Grace," cried Adolph, almost hysterically, "you know the worst. Let me hear it. It is better than suspense. Why should we be enemies? If I deceived you, you in turn deceived me."

"No more," cried Grace. "I will hear no more of that past of which you and I should neither desire to think nor speak. I am not your enemy; I wish you well; but I have lost a friend, and while he still lies in yonder room I cannot discuss the subject you have introduced. If you forget he was your father, I cannot forget how kind he was to me, how considerate, how—"

Her voice, broken with sobs, failed her. She covered her face with her handkerchief, and glided from the room.

Adolph looked after her wrathfully.

"It is plain that she knows herself to be the

heirress," he muttered. "She has reasons for gratitude which I have not, but I will stay and see the play out. I will hear the will read, and if it disinherits me, contest it to the death. I will not tamely sit down and bear the wrong that I feel no doubt has been put upon me."

After this Adolph remained alone, thinking bitter and angry thoughts, until the guests assembled and the solemn funeral ceremonies drove other ideas even from his mind.

"Ashes to ashes! dust to dust!"

The words had been spoken; the sod lay green above the breast of the old man, who having brought nothing into the world could take nothing out of it, and now that which he had left behind him was uppermost in every mind.

The son who had once been his idol did not even affect to feel one pang of grief or remorse in his own selfish way. He had loved his father once, but that love had long left his bosom, and even in his grave he felt no doubt that his father would continue his enemy.

The will was to be read at once. The lawyer who had written it was to undertake the task. He knew, as did the housekeeper, just where it had always been kept. The key had been taken from the old man's neck, and given just as it was, ribbon and all, to the good old clergyman who had been present when he breathed his last, and now Mr. — delivered it to the lawyer.

"I fear he scarcely forgave his child before he passed away," said the clergyman.

And the lawyer answered:

"Between you and me, I doubt if he did; but that unfeeling man deserves no better. He does not even pretend to any natural affection. This is a terrible world, sir. You do well to counsel us to hate it. It's easier to do that than to love it—at my time of life, at all events."

And then, with the housekeeper and the clergyman for witnesses, Mr. — proceeded to withdraw the will from its hiding-place. He unlocked the drawer, and plunging his hand into its depths, felt about for the solitary parchment that lay therein. He felt nothing. Then he aided the sense of touch by that of sight, and looked in.

There was nothing to be seen. The drawer was empty.

"We have made a mistake. This is the wrong drawer," said the lawyer.

"No, sir," said the housekeeper; "that can't be. Master had a particular key made for it. It don't open any other; nor no other key opens the drawer."

"Nevertheless we will look into the others," said

the lawyer, and then began a search which was long earnest, and utterly fruitless for the missing will.

The guests assembled to hear the reading were compelled to depart. Only Adolph remained to await the issue:

Not a drawer or closet or box remained unsearched. The beds were examined, the boards sounded, even the chimney investigated, lost in his fears that some one might tamper with the document, the old man might have hidden it in some out-of-the-way place. But search as they might, they found no trace of it.

While this was going on Grace packed up her wardrobe, her most valued keepsakes, and her few books, and summoned a half-witted boy from the neighbouring hotel to convey them hither for her.

In vain the housekeeper sought to induce her to remain. She would not.

"They will find no will," Grace said, in that quiet determined tone of hers. "And I do not desire to remain in Adolph Bartholmæ's house any longer. Thank you, Mrs. Benson, for your kindness to me. You ought to be happy now. You will stay here. Mr. Adolph will never part with you."

"But I'm sure that that was a will," said Mrs. Benson. "And master kept the key so safe, and watched it so. Oh, ma'am don't hurry off so. I'm in the house, and it's all right for you to stay. Nobody could think anything improper of it."

But Grace shook hands with her, and hurried into the fly in which her trunks were already placed. And drove away in the direction of the hotel for a while. Then Grace leant towards him, and said:

"Steve I've changed my mind. I don't think I'll go to the hotel."

Thereupon Steve turned down a cross-road, and paused only when the little waiting-room of the railway-station was reached.

"I sha'n't want you any longer, Steve," said the lady, when the trunks were set down. "Thank you, and here's your money, and good-bye."

Adolph Bartholmæ, as the only heir of the old man, took possession of the estate, and brought his wife and child to live in the handsome house, which he made handsomer still with new furniture and decorations.

And after all, it seemed only right and natural that he should do so, and very probable that the old man had relented, and destroyed the document which had disinherited him. Only the lawyer did not believe this, and wondered sometimes, in his secret soul, how the drawer became empty, and whether the old clergyman had watched the key well while it was in his possession.

(To be continued.)





[THE WARNING.]

## THE UNKNOWN KNIGHT;

OR,

## THE LION-HEARTED.

## CHAPTER IV.

Much in the stranger's mien appears,  
To justify suspicious fears;  
On his dark face a scorching clime  
And toil had done the work of time,  
Yet left—what age alone could tame—  
The lip of pride, the eye of flame.

Scott.

RUPERT hastened back to the inn and asked if any person had inquired for him during his absence, but received a negative reply. For an hour he waited, now promenading the dim hall and now stalking to and fro in front of the "Blue Anchor."

"He does not come, he does not come!" he hissed, while his face flushed and his eyes kindled with rage. "I shall tarry no longer. I will go to his house, for my message must be delivered in person."

Hastening into the street where the youth, to whom we have before alluded, was watching the rioters, he ordered his horse and, when it was brought up, vaulted into the saddle and was soon out of sight. Ever long he had gained the aristocratic quarter of the city where the duke resided, and dismounting, rapped loudly for admittance at the richly-carved door. It was cautiously opened by the porter, and Rupert asked, gruffly:

"Can I see the Duke of Ellsmere?"

The servant shook his head and replied:

"Nay, nay."

"But I have a message of great importance which must be delivered to him in person."

"It is impossible," observed the porter, "his grace has been alarmingly injured, and the surgeons doubt if he will live till morning."

"How and where?" cried Rupert.

"Why, you must know that there has been a terrible riot in the city to-night?"

The visitant bowed assent, and the lackey went on:

"My master went to the king's banquet with his lady love and ordered the charioteer to return for him as soon as midnight, but when he came out from the Abbey and led his companion towards the carriage the frightened horses reared and plunged, felling him to the ground. His head struck a stone, and the fall re-opened a wound which he received not long ago, and what with loss of blood and the injury to his brain his situation is most perilous. Three surgeons are now with him, and the Earl of Castleton and some of his other friends are here."

"And so," said Rupert, "I cannot deliver my message, but I need not keep you waiting longer," and without another word he stalked from the door.

Still, he resolved to know the truth of the porter's story, and hurrying up a stone staircase which led to a balcony on one wing of that grand, old mansion, he gazed in through the open window. By the light of the lamps, burning here and there, he could see the princely splendour of the duke's chamber, the walls, windows, and the cumbersome couch draped with costly velvet, the elaborate carving of the chairs and tables, the rare goblets which stood on a stand hard by the sufferer, the satin pillows on which his head rested, and the duke's crest emblazoned above the gorgeous canopy arching over him. The curtains of the windows had been flung back to admit the breeze of early morning, and as he gazed at the ghastly face and listened to the words of the leeches, Rupert fully realised the truth. With a thousand conflicting emotions struggling for the mastery, he again bounded into the saddle and rode away.

"Would that I had delivered my message before he went to the banquet," exclaimed the strange man; "if he lives he shall not tempt me to such folly again. Come, come," he added, giving his fine bay a blow from the rude whip he carried, "you and I must make up for the time we have lost here, my good Sultan."

The horse bounded onward at a furious pace, and London was soon left far in the rear, and steed and rider were again in the open country. The lark went soaring upward to warble her matin hymn in the tranquil, blue sky; the flowers of England opened their golden hearts and swayed their leaves like some beautiful child when it awakens from pleasant dreams. The sun rose from the rosy east, glowing through the fleecy mists which hung about the mountain peaks and transmuting them into crimson and amber till they looked as if they had risen from the crucible of a skillful alchemist. The peasantry were moving to their toil and guiding heavy wains drawn by oxen or mules, and afar on the green slopes sheep lay couched and cattle cropped the herbage, now and then pausing to drink from a clear, rocky brook, or a still pool fringed with rushes, sword-grass, and the blossoms which love such haunts. Beyond lay grand, old forests, beneath whose shady arches the wood-moss lay soft as velvet and green as emerald, while amid the boughs of the gigantic oak and beech wild birds wove their nests, and in many a leafy covert the hare and the deer found their home. Now and then the traveller saw before him, leagues away perchance, the gray walls and towers of some old, feudal castle, the spire of a rural church shot up-

ward, or a monastery, with its quaint architecture and its surrounding grounds, rose to view along his path.

It was midday, when he reached a cottage, situated in the secluded glen, a mile at least from the highway. The dwelling was a lowly, thatched hut, and yet the ivy, which crept over the walls, gave it a picturesque air; an old thorn tree stood near the cottage, and thickets of holly and alder nodded in the breeze, while in a large garden might be seen rustling corn, and thriving vegetables. Before the door of this cottage sat a woman, whose striking countenance might have formed a rare study for the physiognomist. Her features were Roman in their outline, her complexion dark as if it had been chiselled from bronze, her lips firm and resolute, and a pair of brown eyes gleamed beneath her broad brow. As she laid aside her distaff, and moved into the cottage, she seemed a woman of stately presence, tall, and with a certain dignity of bearing not always manifest in her class. She wore a homespun linen dress, with the long closely fitting sleeves rolled up from her wrists; a kirtle of some crimson cloth falling over this, and fastened by a leathern girdle, and a headgear also of linen, entirely concealing her hair, save a single smooth band on the dusky forehead. When this singular woman had performed her commission in the house, she came forth again, and resumed her task, her fingers hovering amid the white flax like a brown thrush. Suddenly she heard hoof-beats, and glancing along the narrow path, which wound into the glen, perceived a horseman approaching. A wild thrill swept through her frame, as the traveller drew rein hard by, for notwithstanding the disguise he had assumed, she recognised him at once.

The Spaniard had resolved to endeavour to delude her for a time with the metamorphosis with which he had deceived the duke, and gazing down at her he said:

"Prithee, good dame, could you give a stranger, a poor peasant, a morsel?"

A scornful laugh broke from the woman's lips, and starting to her feet, she rejoined:

"Rupert Vasco, did you think to deceive me? Through the most skillful disguises your quick brain can invent, I should know you."

The traveller looked perplexed for an instant, and then joined in the laugh, and replied:

"Dame Margery, you are too shrewd to be deceived."

"Aye!" said the woman, "it seems as though I had seen you appear in a hundred different characters, and yet you could not mislead me. But what brings you to this part of England?"

"I had a message for the Duke of Ellsmere, and I have journeyed from Cornwall to London, to deliver it."

"And you found him. Yesterday he would be there to join in the ceremonies of the coronation."

"Yes, and Dame Margery, you should have witnessed the scene, when I met his chariot in the street. 'Stand aside, boor!' he cried, as if he were king instead of Richard, but I would not and could not be beaten off, and when he realised who the seeming peasant was, he soon came to terms."

A strange, inexplicable expression passed over the face of the woman, as she listened, and her heart beat sternly, but in a few moments she had regained her composure sufficiently to inquire:

"How and where did he receive you?"

"Not at all," was the curt response; "as you know, he is perfectly infatuated with the Lady Alice Villiers, and he was on his way to escort her to the royal banquet. Of course, he would not attend to business," and there was a peculiar emphasis on that word, "till the pleasures of the evening were over!"

And now Rupert proceeded to relate the particulars of the riot, the alarming injuries the nobleman had received, and the state in which he had left him, when compelled to leave the city.

"Dame Margery," he added, "he may be dead by this time."

"Very well," was the only reply, and though a wild thrill once more swept through the woman's frame, she gave no sign to the watching eyes of Rupert, for she had been too long accustomed to self-control to betray the emotion those words aroused. There was a brief silence, and then the traveller said:

"Where is your younger son?"

"He has gone to the neighbouring forest."

Once more there was a pause, and then Rupert said:

"Dame Margery, I am half-starved; give me something, I pray you, to satisfy my hunger."

The woman hesitated a few moments, ere she rejoined:

"Come into the house, and mayhap I can find a morsel for you. There is some fish," she continued, as the guest followed her into the hut, "there is some flesh broiling on the coals for dinner, and if you are as hungry as you say, you can relish oatmeal cake."

She pointed to a table, furnished in the simplest manner, to which she hastily removed a portion of the fish, and seating herself on an oaken bench, Rupert commenced the first meal he had taken since he left London. When he had risen, he expressed his thanks for the woman's hospitality, and drawing forth a heavy purse, laid a golden coin on the table.

"Put back your money," cried the woman, and a look of irrepressible scorn shot into her keen eyes; "nay, nay, I will not take a farthing!"

The traveller was forced to obey, and stalking from the cottage, he once more mounted his horse, exclaiming:

"Good even, friend Margery."

"Nay, I am not your friend," cried the woman, raising her hand to give force to her words.

"Ah, say you so?" continued the guest.

"Remember," observed the woman, "I am your enemy."

And as she spoke, she moved into the cottage.

#### CHAPTER V.

Who, then, is she—

This woman veiled in mystery, whose life.

Whose acts, whose face are all inscrutable?

Pain would I know the secret of her life. Ford.

WHEN Rupert Vasco left Dame Margery's hut, she remained for a long time in profound silence, standing still and statue-like, with the folds of her peasant costume falling about her stony figure, like the drapery of a statue; then, however, her mood changed, her dusky cheek burned, her eyes flashed, her firm lips curled, and her whole frame shook. In the midst of her musings she heard the quick, eager footfall of youth, and the next moment the rude door was flung open, and a young girl entered, followed by a lad several years younger.

The boy carried a bow, and a sheaf of arrows at his back, and half-a-dozen birds, which had been the fruit of his day's hunting, while the maiden bore a basket of berries, in one corner of which had been placed a piece of wild honeycomb, glowing goldingly out from the leaves on which it rested.

The girl was very beautiful, with a graceful, Hobe-like figure, and the crimson burning through the clear olive of her cheek like the flush of ruby wine, cherry lips, large black, brilliant eyes, and a profusion of midnight air floating over her shoulders. With her young head crowned with a wild vine, all aglow with scarlet flowers, her gay, amber-coloured kirtle, and her flagree ear-rings and necklace, she looked like some young Indian queen.

"They are light-hearted," said the woman, as she heard them approaching. "Let them remain so as long as they may. I have only told them enough to guard them against that man, Rupert Vasco—they shun him as they should. Had they been at home, he should not have crossed my threshold to-day, and yet I have learned something important from his visit. Ah! the Duke of Ellsmere—what is he now—living or dead? I must know?"

She was here interrupted by the entrance of her children, and the boy proudly displayed the trophies of the chase, and his sister pointed to the treasures stored within her basket.

Dame Margery received her children with a cordial welcome, hastily dressed the birds, and when the late dinner was over, she said:

"Bessie, we must hurry through our work, for I am going away."

The two listened in much surprise, and then the boy rejoined:

"This is something new, mother. You did not speak of it before we left you."

"No—oh, no, child, but I have had tidings, which makes it needful for me to go to London at once."

"To London," echoed Bessie, "and what is to become of us?"

"I shall not leave you unprotected," said the woman. "There is a family half-a-league beyond, and Goodman Blake will take you under his protection while I am gone."

Both the listeners and seemed well pleased with this proposal, so in due time the cottage was put in the nicest order, the floor nicely sanded, the pewter and wooden trenches arrayed on the rude shelves, and the flax, distaff, and the few treasures Dame Margery could boast, securely locked in the huge oaken chest. Then the strange woman took down from a peg on the dark wall a long black cloak, in which she wrapped her tall figure, and drew over the head-gear she had worn a close hood. Meanwhile she had bidden the boy bring round the horse which had been grazing just beyond the glen, and as she emerged and closed the low door, she found the wild, noble-looking animal standing before her, saddled and bridled; but notwithstanding his uncanny appearance, he was as fleet as Rupert Vasco's bay. With her own hands she lashed the portmanteau, which she had resolved to carry, to the horse, and thus mounted, she bade Bessie and Hugh to spring up behind her. Ere long her children were consigned to the care of David Blake, and the kind-hearted goodwife, and Dame Margery started on her journey.

The sun might have been two hours high when she struck into the high road leading to London, her horse speeding on, like a bird upon the wing—past cultivated fields, sweeping around low, brown, rambling farmhouses, with peaked roofs, huge chimneys, and latticed windows, and through hamlets, villages, and thriving towns. Boiling clouds rolled to and fro across the sky; the wind rose and piped shrilly to the trembling leaves; gigantic trees tossed their foliage, which had not yet been touched by the frost, in the blast, and swayed their broad boughs, as if some human being in mortal agony were madly lifting their strong arms as signals of distress. The rain soon began to fall, and beat fiercely against the traveller, but she still kept on, and when the twilight faded she opened her portmanteau, and drew forth a quaint little lantern, by whose light she managed to guide her horse, and thus journeyed on till ten o'clock.

Then on the verge of a little hamlet she stopped for a time, but though she rested, and refreshed her horse, she allowed herself neither food or sleep. At an early hour she resumed her journey, and ere long the rain ceased to fall, but the sky was still gloomy, and riotous winds haunted the woods, through which she passed, and threw into wild tumult the waters of lake and river. Still the woman never faltered, her nerves were like steel, her features calm and statuesque, and there was a cold metallic gleam in her dark eyes. When London lay a mile perhaps before her, she stopped, her hitherto rigid figure trembled with some strong emotion, and the crimson burned, and faded on her dark face as the memories of the past, and thoughts of the future swept through her brain. At a small public house near she drew rein, and entering the inn, soon reappeared with a change of costume. Her cloak had been packed in her portmanteau, and the woman now wore a riding-habit of black cloth, made after the fashion of the times, and a high-crowned hat rested above her abundant brown hair, in which there was not a gleam of silver. More than her wouted dignity of manner was visible in her whole bearing, when she once more resumed her seat in the saddle, and many who chanced to meet this solitary equestrian admired the grace, and ease of the stranger for she rode like a *Du Vernoy*.

It was sunset when she came across a quaint old bridge which spanned the Thames, and found her riding along the streets of London. By the orders

of the newly-crowned king, the rioters had been quelled in that city, and comparative quiet reigned. At length dame Margery reached the stately town residence of the Duke of Ellsmere, and her heart gave a sudden bound as she marked the profound stillness which reigned in and around the splendid home of the rich noble. The shutters of rich mahogany were closed along the whole of the front windows, and on the eastern window the sunset light struck over gorgeous stained glass, bringing out all its brilliant hues, and lingering elsewhere on rich drapery of crimson, gold, and purple, which she knew swept from cornice to floor in the chamber within.

The silence which brooded over all was broken by the woman, who, using the knowledge previously obtained, found means to enter the court-yard, in the centre of which the waters of a fountain shot up in a silvery sheet of spray, and the lulling murmur that a rose from this, and the occasional song of a bird seemed the only sounds which awoke the solemn hush. No falconer with the hawk perched on his hand, stood near, no liveried grooms moved to and fro with prancing steeds, not even the hounds, who usually kept watch and ward, were visible, and the woman thought they had doubtless been removed, lest their barking should disturb their master. Suddenly from the court-yard into which she had glided she caught a glimpse of that wing of the mansion where Rupert Vasco found the duke, and her resolve was soon taken.

Leaving her horse at an inn, she stole back, resolved to wait, and watch, and if possible carry out the purpose which brought her to London. In her hiding-place behind a huge stone urn, she heard the following conversation between one of the leeches and a person who was evidently a friend. As the surgeon sauntered down the steps the stranger said:

"I believe you are in attendance upon the Duke of Ellsmere?"

"Yes, my lord."

"And how is he? There are so many contradictory reports, that one cannot tell what to believe."

"His grace is still living," replied the leech, "though after he was brought home, he was so utterly prostrated, that we feared he might die before morning, but he must have a strong constitution, I fancy, and he is still living, though there is such severe inflammation of the brain at present, that it may prove fatal."

The stranger walked away with the leech, and the woman heard no more; but as hours wore on, the door was left open for a few moments, and she managed to gain admittance, and hastened through the wide lofty hall, with its marble floor, its tapestried walls, its urns and statues, and the gilded sconces, which shed their light over all. In another instant she had gained a place of safety, and there she remained till most of the retainers had retired, and only two were left to watch the sufferer. She had known John Greame and his wife in happier days, and she thought that perhaps they might be induced to accede to her wishes. Ere she had left the room where she had found refuge, she glanced out through the open window; it was the solemn hour of midnight; the moon had risen, and was floating up, above the waters of the Thames, where the quaint vessels of that period were moored, and on, on through the vast realms of space. Watchmen were pacing to and fro, and a priest was hurriedly passing on his way, doubtless, to administer the last rites of the Roman Church to some departing soul. Turning from the casement, the strange woman glided through corridor after corridor, till she stood at the threshold of that sumptuous chamber. Both of the servants there perceived her at once, and a single word broke from their lips:

"Marguerite!"

The visitor started, for it was long since she had been addressed by the name she had borne in girlhood, and though accustomed to self-control for many a weary year, she started, and a sudden spasm swept through her whole frame. In another instant Ruth Greame was at her side, murmuring in a voice scarcely above a whisper:

"Forgive my rudeness, but I was so surprised to see you here."

The woman wrung the speaker's hand, and replied:

"I have journeyed far to know whether he is living or dead." And she pointed towards the cambric couch of some costly wood, with its richly-carved posts; the costly counterpane, with its heavy silken fringe sweeping to the broad foot-cloth, on which it stood, and beneath whose canopy still lay the Duke of Ellsmere, while a watching retainer stood near, waving a fan of gorgeous feathers.

"For the sake of our old friendship you would not, could not, deny me admittance. I will share your watch."



"But you must not disturb him."

The woman made no reply, but with a soft foot-fall, as if she had been shod with velvet, took her way to the bedside.

The duke's face was deeply flushed; the hand she grasped was burning with fever, and though he had fallen into a fitful slumber, his sleep was disturbed and unrefreshing. At length his blood-shot eyes opened, he flung the arm—which had been uninjured—wildly aloft, and his gaze fastened wonderingly on the countenance of Dame Margary. There was a moment of sanity, during which he fully recognised the unbidden guest, and exclaimed: "Oh! Marguerite, Marguerite, what brought you here?"

"Tidings of your mishap," replied the woman.

The duke passed his white hand hurriedly over his throbbing brow, and then reason again fled, and he began rave in the wild frenzy of delirium. Ruth Grame approached, and, not without considerable difficulty, succeeded in administering a portion of the opiate, left by the leech, but he still talked on incoherently, and half concealing herself in the drapery, which swept over the couch, Dame Margary listened with intense eagerness to every word that passed his lips. To her these delirious ravings had a peculiar meaning. Now he talked of Rupert Vasco, of Cornwall cases, and the rugged Cornwall coast, with the surf surging over the rocky beach; now of the dim passages of the Alps, and Apennines, the lone regions of the Tyrol haunted by armed men; and now of London, the ceremonies of the coronation; Lady Alice Villiers, his beautiful, and high-born bride elect, his meeting with the messenger, who journeyed far to deliver some important dispatches; of the hours spent at the royal fête, and the stirring scenes enacted during that terrible riot.

Then his fancy wandered back into the previous winter, when an Unknight Knight had rescued the fair Alice from a terrible death on the bleak moorland, and again he seemed to see the tall, mail-clad figure, mounted on a superb black steed, riding through the streets of London on the day of the coronation, nay, even passing near the window of the Earl of Castleton's mansion, to watch his betrothed bride, and the glimpse he had caught of one whom he believed to be the same person, lurking about Westminster Abbey.

"Back, back!" he exclaimed; "why should you step between me and my lady-love. Begone, knave, she is mine!"

Thus time dragged wearily by; the sands in the hour-glass wasted, the night-lamp grew dim, the stars paled, and the freshness of the early morning filled the air, which crept through the open window. Finally Dame Margary arose and glided from the room like a shadow, and stealing from the house, crept through the postern-gate and took her way to the inn where she had left her horse.

Days passed, and she was still in London. The Duke of Ellsmere had been pronounced out of danger by his attending leeches. The Earl of Castleton earnestly expressed his delight, but during his illness Lady Alice had felt inexpressibly relieved at her freedom from attentions which were so distasteful to her, and now they were resumed. No sooner was he sufficiently strong to bear the exertion, than he dictated a message, which was written by his secretary, expressing his intense joy at being again convalescent, and his hope of soon meeting his own beautiful Alice.

The choicest flowers, the richest fruits, and the most costly jewels were often sent to her, but the young girl prized far more the knot of moorland flowers and grasses, which had been flung at her feet by the Unknight Knight, and this she still kept locked in her own *escritoire*. One evening, when the Earl of Castleton was absent from the city, a tall, veiled figure stole into the bower-room, where Lady Alice sat leaning over her harp, endeavouring to while away the time that hung heavily on her hands, when the rich tapestry, which separated this apartment from her dressing chamber, was flung aside, and a female figure appeared.

"Lady Alice Villiers," she said, solemnly, "I have come to warn you."

"Who—who are you?" faltered the girl.

"That you cannot now know; but, nevertheless, I have a mission to perform. Pardon my boldness in thus intruding upon you, but I wish to have a few moments' converse with you."

"Go on," said the young girl. "I am all attention."

"Lady Alice Villiers,"—and she spoke with a clear, metallic ring of her voice—"would you have mourned had the Duke of Ellsmere died from the injuries he received the evening of the king's banquet?"

"No—oh, no, madam, though it is a solemn thing to have a human soul pass into eternity."

"I knew it could not be possible," resumed the

woman, "you could not love that man—you, so young, so beautiful!"

"There you are right," said the girl, earnestly. "His society is utterly distasteful, but notwithstanding my repugnance to the match, I have been obliged to accept him."

"He is utterly undeserving the love of any woman," continued the visitant.

"What—what mean you?" asked the maiden, leaning towards her companion in her keen anxiety.

"I cannot reveal more now," replied the woman; "but do you love another?"

The crimson surged over the girl's face, her lips quivered, and a tender gleam shone like starlight in her soft blue eyes.

"You are a stranger," observed Lady Alice, "and yet to you I will confess that I have found my ideal—that there is one to whom, though I have only met him thrice, my whole heart turns as the flower follows the sunshine."

The veiled lady paused for an instant, ere she rejoined:

"I am interested in your destiny. I would not have your heart crushed as others have been."

The Lady Alice gazed at her mysterious visitor with interest, not unmingled with awe and wonder. The earnest manner of the veiled lady impressed Lady Alice's mind strongly with a hope that she could in some manner assist her; but fresh doubt speedily arose, and she said, anxiously:

"But what can be done? My father is firm in his resolve. How—how can I avoid fulfilling my engagement?"

"Take heart," replied the woman. "I will not lose sight of you, mayhap, if I know the name of him who is your ideal, I might be of some service."

The young girl softly murmured the name of Harold Courtnay, and proceeded to relate the circumstances connected with her meeting with the hero of her young life.

"And now," said the visitant, "I must leave you, but do not as yet breathe a word of my visit to the Earl of Castleton or the duke. Should you see this knight of whom you have spoken, you may tell him all."

"Stranger," exclaimed Alice, "will you not give me one look of your face?"

Dame Margary, for it was she, lifted her veil, and for a moment revealed the face, which still retained traces of rare beauty; the large brown eyes, now full of shadows; the cheek on which a warm flush glowed, and the lips that had grown so grave and firm with the lapse of weary years.

Lady Alice gazed earnestly on the countenance of her strange guest, as if she would impress it indelibly on her memory, and then in silence she clasped the brown hand in her own white and jewelled fingers, and they parted.

An hour later the same figure stole into the Duke of Ellsmere's mansion, and gliding across the marble floor of the vestibule, entered the lofty and spacious apartment, where the duke sat leaning back against the velvet cushions of a luxurious chair. The next instant she had flung up her veil, and the light of the tapers in the golden candelabra shone full upon her face.

"Woman," cried the duke angrily, "why—why are you here?"

"Hark ye, and I will tell you," replied Dame Margary. "I heard from Rupert Vasco, that Lionel Walsingham, now Duke of Ellsmere, had been seriously injured, and the leeches despaired of his life. I came hither to learn the truth. I visited you when you were delirious, and in a moment of sanity you recognised me."

"You would not have lamented, had you seen my funeral procession pass through the streets of London."

The woman shook her head, and a sudden light shot into her eyes.

"No, oh, no," she replied, "for then I should know you had lost the power to wrong me—you, who are such a dishonour to the nobility of England."

"Hist, hist," muttered the duke. "I will ring for a servant—for after my illness, I cannot be thus disturbed."

"Lionel Walsingham," rejoined the woman, drawing herself up with all the dignity of a Queen, "remember my power, and be silent, it is not for your sake, but for that of others, that you have not before been exposed to the world. A word more, and I am gone, your recent peril should make you wiser, and a better man, and now I leave you, but have a care—have a care, how you comport yourself," and the next moment she had disappeared.

With some difficulty, the duke moved to the window, but the sky was moonless, and he could see no trace of his visitor.

"It was an evil day for me," he muttered, "when I met that Marguerite, and I sincerely hope, I shall see her no more."

## CHAPTER VI.

Then each at once his fashions drew,  
Each on the ground his scabbard threw,  
Each looked to sun, and stream, and pain,  
As what they ne'er might see again;  
Then foot, and point, and eye opposed,  
In dubious strife they darkly closed. Scott.

A MONTH rolled into eternity, and "golden robed October" came with all her glory. Gorgeous hues burned amid the foliage of trees and shrub, and in the hearts of the richly tinted flowers; by day, the atmosphere was steeped in a dreamy, poetic haze, and by night, the harvest moon hung broad and silvery, and the stars glowed clear and bright, and steadfast. The family of the Earl of Castleton, had left London, for a temporary sojourn in a picturesque hunting-lodge, situated in Cumberland, and hither the Duke of Ellsmere had followed them. The lodge was a large rambling old structure surrounded by an extensive park, here sweeping away in smooth lawns, and there shadowy with dense copices and deep forests, and at that period, haunted by herds of deer. The hunting season promised to be a gay and brilliant one, and daily a well mounted party with "hawk and hound."

"Like a rich masque swept forth,"

attended by grooms and falconers. The Duke of Ellsmere's constant companionship was by no means agreeable to the fair Lady Alice, and with his keen insight of human nature, it was with extreme bitterness, that he marked the indifference with which she received his devotion. His praise, his tender words, his costly presents were all wasted upon her, and yet he persisted in his wooing. On his recovery he had told the Earl his idea that she might mayhap be not a little interested in the Unknown Knight, who had twice rendered her a signal service, and her father during a long conference with her, had sneered at that unknown adventurer, whose history was shrouded in such mystery, and expressly forbidden her to meet him again, under the penalty of being confined in her room, or walled up in a convent, till she should be the Duke of Ellsmere's bride.

One day the party at the hunting-lodge had returned much earlier than usual from the chase, and Lady Alice looked up from the embroidery frame over which she was bending, and thought with a sigh of regret that she must again be subjected to the attentions of him whom her father had destined as her future husband. The next moment the earl entered, and said:

"The duke wished me to express his profound regret that he could not return to the lodge and enjoy your charming society. On our way back he learned that some important business required his immediate presence at the village, and besides; I am going to meet your brother a distance of ten leagues."

The young girl sprang to her feet in a wild thrill of joy, that she was so soon to meet her only brother now returning from an embassy to the continent, whither he had been sent to ascertain what aid would be given to the Crusades, then a topic of deep interest in almost every nationality of Europe.

"Launcelot is then coming back," exclaimed Alice, eagerly. "Oh, this is glad tidings, my father. How did you hear of his arrival in England?"

"I received a letter, child," replied the earl, "requesting me to meet him at Glenburn, and we shall not return till to-morrow, but you will not fear with all the servants within call, and especially the faithful old steward."

"No, oh, no," said the girl; "but do not tarry—journey at your utmost speed, for the hours will drag slowly till I again see Launcelot."

A few moments afterwards the earl left the lodge, and Alice moved to a broad, upper window, and stood gazing at her father as he dashed down the broad avenue leading across the lawn, and passed through the open gate, which was closed after his exit.

The day wore away, the late dinner hour came and went, and Lady Alice dined in solitary state, for her father had only invited the Duke of Ellsmere to make a temporary home with them; and the others, who joined in the chase, and shared the various hospitalities of the lodge, were chosen from the neighbouring gentry and nobility.

The sunlight deepened into evening, and clouds began to gather in the sky, now and then veiling the harvest moon, and riotous winds haunted the coase and forest, and moaned like a homeless child around the old hunting-lodge.

Meanwhile a band of armed men had gathered in a shadowy glade of the park, a mile, perchance, from the lodge. There were dark, stern faces, glittering eyes, and knit brows amid these threescore men, clad in a sort of uniform, and armed with various weapons—long clubs, pikes, strong bows, which would send barbed arrows from their sounding strings, swords, cutlasses, and javelins, which they ever and anon brandished with fierce, menacing gestures. After a

brief consultation and a few emphatic orders from their leader they commenced their march over the park, moving with extreme rapidity, now pausing to leap across some brook, amid whose waters the dying leaves were eddying like a frail, young life, in the mystic river of Death, and now watching with eager eyes to see if any of the family or servants were abroad on that autumnal night. An hour after their conference the band were gathered around the old hunting-lodge, and with a wild cry of vengeance they rushed madly to the attack.

In utter dismay, Lady Alice and the terrified servants listened to the shouts and jeers of this lawless band, together with their blows, which beat against the walls and doors and dashed in the windows, while arrows and javelins were flung in to the lodge, and swords waved aloft in mad defiance.

The old steward had immediately joined his young mistress, and his face was grave and sad, as he exclaimed:

"Oh, my lady, my lady; it is terrible that you should be subjected to such an attack, and your father and the duke both gone."

"Oh, David, what is to be done?" cried the girl, anxiously, for at that hour the presence of her detested lover would have been welcome.

"Follow me," rejoined the servant, "and I will take you to the safest place the house affords."

And he guided her trembling footsteps into a little nook opening from the breakfast-room, and then asked:

"We must have help, Lady Alice, and I will hurry up into the watch-tower and ring the bell. The neighbours will know by that signal that we are in some peril."

With these words he hastened away to carry out his purpose, and the girl listened intently for the peal of the bell; but it came not. Soon, however, the steward returned and said:

"Oh! Lady Alice, those wretches have removed the tongue of the bell and now, I shall hold a counsel of war with all the retainers in the house, and I know they will like me to be ready to give their own lives in defence of their dear, young lady."

Tears gushed into the maiden's eyes, and in a broken voice she thanked him for his kindness, while memories of other hours of extreme peril flashed through her brain, and with a wildly throbbing heart she recalled the efforts of the Unknown Knight on her behalf.

"Now he is far from me," she murmured, "he cannot be at hand to rescue me, and it may be, that we shall never, never meet again. Besides, I cannot surmise what can be the cause of this attack; my father did not dream of any such onslaught, when he left me, and the cause is shrouded in mystery. These men ever and anon shriek out, revenge, revenge, but I cannot dream why they should wreak their revenge on me, though my father has enemies, I dare say."

She paused in her soliloquy, and listened intently to a cry, which rang sharply on her ear.

"Come out here, Lionel Walsingham, Duke of Ellsmere," cried the vindictive leader, "we have a long account to settle with you, but you skulk, you and your host, behind the tapestry, and play the craven!"

The old steward now mounted to the battlements, and though arrows came hurtling about him, walked fearlessly towards the marauders, and exclaimed:

"Ho there, neither the Duke of Ellsmere, nor my master the Earl of Castleton, is here! His grace has gone away on some imperative business, and the earl set out hours ago on a journey to Glenburn."

A loud laugh broke from the marauders, and one cried:

"'Tis a lie; in order to conceal some of England's nobility, they are skulking behind the arras, I'll wager!"

"Aye, aye!" passed from lip to lip amid the band, and then, Ainsie drew his figure, till he looked almost regal, and continued:

"I scorn a lie as I do such an onslaught as this on a comparatively defenceless hunting-lodge."

The next instant, and while the desperadoes were yet irresolute, they were joined by another of their own band, who through some error as to the hour of the attack, had just arrived upon the ground.

"Coward," he exclaimed, "it is true, the duke, and the earl are both gone!"

"Then," cried the leader, "while half of you secure whatever valuables the lodge contains, we will capture the Lady Alice, and these retainers who are trying to defend her."

The next moment the band surged into the lodge, carrying destruction with them; the rare plate, the costly jewels, which had come down to the Villier's family through many successive generations, all fell into the hands of these desperate men.

"And now for the Lady Alice," said the chief, and the servants were flung aside, as they fought their way towards the place of her temporary concealment.

The next moment a tall, mail-clad figure, who had scaled the walls, and with his strong arm beat down whatever obstructions were in his path, came flying down the staircase, love lending speed to every fleet footfall—it was the Unknown Knight!

"Take heart," he whispered to the old steward. "I will save your young mistress!"

The next moment he stood face to face with the beautiful Alice Villiers, her long golden hair dishevelled, her blue eyes moist, her lips half-parted in her keen anxiety, and the tears lying on her burning cheek like dew upon the petal of a rose. The girl glanced up at him, and murmured:

"Is this real, or is it a dream?"

"It is no dream," replied the young man. "I am here—I—Harold Courtney, and again I trust I can save you."

As he spoke, he took her in his arms, and gazing down at her with a look of unspeakable tenderness, bore her down the staircase in the rear of the lodge, which was not now guarded by any of the marauders, and onward to the spot, where his noble, black steed stood. Gently lifting her to the saddle, and hastily wrapping about her a cloak, he sprang up behind her, and spurred his horse onward at a furious pace. The clouds, which at that time canopied the sky, favoured his purpose, and none of the marauders perceived the Unknown Knight speeding across the vast park with the beautiful Lady Alice encircled by his protecting arm. At length, however, the assailants ascertained that the girl for whom they were in search was missing, and curses and howls of rage attested their disappointment.

"The bird has flown," exclaimed the leader, "and yet she cannot have gone far—make a thorough quest, my men, for if she were our prisoner, methinks both the Duke of Ellsmere and her father would pay a round sum for her ransom. Do not let her escape!"

The work of ruin now progressed with fearful rapidity; rare old tapestry was torn from the walls, and the oaken wainscot violently rapped to discover some hidden panel, leading to a secret chamber, but to no purpose. The dim corridors far and near were explored, the watch-tower ascended, and every room rigorously investigated, and then, with blazing torches, they descended to the cellar, but the light only glared over the routed stores for family use, and the tall wine flasks, covered with gossamer cobwebs.

"She is nowhere in the lodge, that is certain," said one of the men.

"Nay, nay," observed the chief, "we must search outside."

And now the masses of vines creeping over the walls were rudely shaken, and eager eyes peered into the clumps of shrubbery tossing in the winds. Another hour was spent in searching the environs of the lodge, and then another consultation was held, and a member of the band, who had received injuries which rendered him unfit for active service, rode up, and declared he had seen a horseman flying across the park, with a lady, and that he had supposed it was some of their own men bearing away Lady Alice Villiers.

"And how long ago?" queried the leader, with breathless interest.

"Methinks it was nearly two hours."

"Who could this unknown deliverer be?" asked the chief. "She must have another lover, I fancy, who has come in the duke's absence to visit Lady Alice, and he must have stolen in unobserved and borne her off; still we must pursue. I will start immediately."

And then turning, he gave a few other orders to the men.

Hastening to the Earl of Castleton's stables, he quickly saddled one of the finest hunters belonging to the noble, and dashed off in quest of the fugitive lady.

Away, away, away sped the Unknown Knight across the broad park, sweeping around the hunting-lodge, which had been so rudely assailed, and then the gallant horseman struck into a wild road, winding through a lonely region of country, and yet, notwithstanding the perils which threatened her should they be pursued, a sweet, restful expression stole over the girl's face, and a calm trust into her heart. Finally, after a two hours journey they reached a manor-house, occupied by a family who were fast friends of Harold Courtney, and there he dismounted and bore the girl to a place of refuge.

They knew his love for the fair Lady Alice, and gladly offered her an asylum; and as the family was large, and there were at least a score of retainers attached to it, Courtney thought she could be gallantly defended, in case that her retreat should be discovered, which he meant to keep a profound secret while such danger threatened her. After committing her to her asylum, and bidding her a tender farewell, he rode back, and had proceeded a league's distance

when he met the ruffianly leader of the desperadoes.

"Hold there," he cried, angrily; "no man shall thwart Robert Armond and go unpunished. You will yet learn, to your cost, that you cannot safely trifle with me!"

"I neither fear you nor your threats," replied the young man, calmly.

"I will give you the same challenge I did the Duke of Ellsmere when I thought him within that old hunting-lodge—draw and defend yourself, for one of us must yield!" and he rushed madly towards the Unknown Knight.

That was, indeed, a striking scene—above them the clouds had now parted and the broad, harvest moon shone full on the lonely spot where they had met; the trees which bordered the path awayed their crimson foliage in the breeze, a rocky stream gurgled and moaned near; and, on the other hand, lay huge stones over which gray mosses had crept. There, mounted on his superb, black charger, and with a surcoat flung over his armour and his helmet rising above his dark, handsome face, the Unknown Knight received the onslaught of his foe, whose eyes glittered fiercely as he rushed onward to the attack, but that desperate man found himself no match for his cool, clear, brave antagonist; such courage, such skill, he was forced mentally to acknowledge he had rarely witnessed. Besides, this young man was comparatively fresh for the combat, while Armond had come from a long march and the attack on the Earl of Castleton's hunting-lodge, and there he had drunk deeply of the choice wines found in the earl's cellar. So he found his own blows parried with consummate address, while he had received three severe wounds, and his antagonist was fast beating him back when a confederate, who had resolved to follow the chief, came to his aid. But he, too, found a formidable opponent in the stranger, and ere long the chief was felled to the ground senseless, and his companion unhorsed. Then he unbowed a scarf he had worn as a girdle, and waved it aloft as a flag of truce.

"I pray your mercy!" shouted the humbled man.

"First promise me more to molest her whom I love better than life itself."

The stranger readily assented, and while he bent over his unconscious chief, he cried:

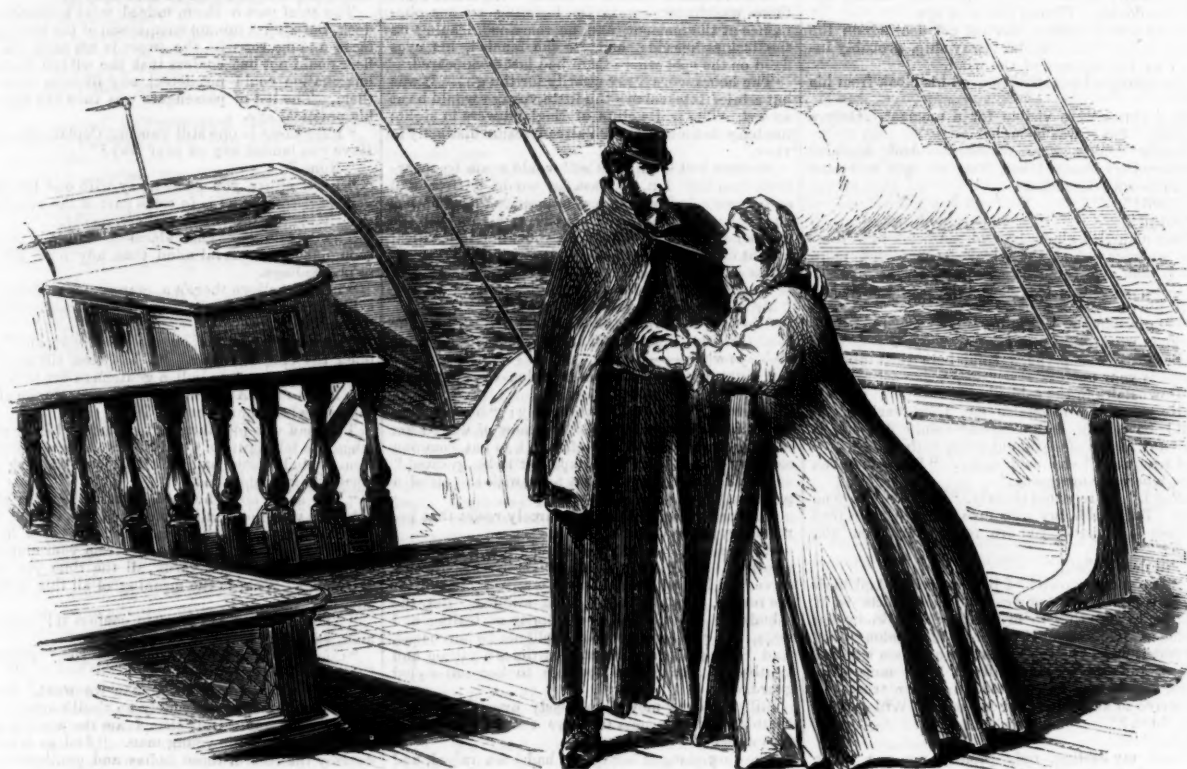
"Who—who are you? By Jove, you must be another Richard, for you have the heart of a lion."

"You may remember me as the Unknown Knight," replied the cavalier, and he rode away and, by a circuitous route, returned to the manor house whither he had borne Lady Alice, the star of his life, the bright centre round which revolved so many fond hopes and dreams, in spite of the barriers which rose between their young hearts.

(To be continued.)

**THE OLD COLOURS OF THE 91st (ARGYLLSHIRE) HIGHLANDERS.**—On the 24th August last, an interesting ceremony took place on the heights of Dover. The return to this country of the gallant 91st (Argyllshire) Highlanders, after an absence on foreign service for fifteen years, was made the occasion for the presentation of a set of new colours to the regiment. Mrs. Gordon, wife of Colonel Gordon, in the absence of the Duchess of Argyll, made the presentation, while the Archbishop of Canterbury—himself a Scotchman—performed the usual religious ceremony observed on such occasions. The old colours, which had been carried in front of the regiment for twenty-nine years, and had come not unscathed through the Kaffir and Indian wars, were presented to the Duke of Argyll. The colours are destined to fill a fitting niche in the noble hall of Inverary Castle, situated in the centre of the country in which the 91st was first raised in 1794. As to the influence of the Duke of Argyll, the regiment owes in great part its restoration as a Highland corps, nothing could have been more graceful or appropriate than the presentation of the war and time-worn banners to the chief of the Campbells. The old colours, under the charge of Lieutenant Grant and Ensign Craufurd, of the 91st Highlanders, and escorted by a detachment of the regiment, were conveyed on Monday from Dover to London, and the escort having given them a parting salute at King's-cross Station, returned to Dover. Lieutenant Grant and Ensign Craufurd arrived with the colours on Tuesday morning, at Waverley-bridge Station Edinburgh. Here they were met by an escort of the 42nd Royal Highlanders, and, surrounding the interesting memorial of the regiment, where they were deposited, and where they will remain till Thursday morning, when the officers in charge proceed to Glasgow. Escorted by a guard of the 5th Northumberland Fusiliers, Lieutenant Grant and Ensign Craufurd will carry the colours to the steamer by which they will sail to Inverary Castle, where the colours as before stated, will be finally deposited.





[THE MEETING ON THE PACKET.]

# EVELYN'S PLOT.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

"Will fortune never come with both hands full,  
But write her fair words still in foulst letters?  
She either gives a stomach and no food,  
Such are the poor in health; or else a feast  
And takes away the stomach." *Shakespeare.*

ON the very day when the occurrence related in the last chapter took place, a Rotterdam boat had landed some of the personages nearly connected with the events of our tale on the pier at —

It had been an incomprehensible decision to Edith, accustomed as she was to the hidden and apparently periodical capricious changes of her so called guardian, but still, it had some charms for her; return to the land of her birth, the land where alone there had been a dream, if but a dream, "of light and love," such as rarely "flits twice across the brain." In any case she had no alternative but to submit.

It was no plan of her guardian to consult her wishes in any of his arrangements, and the only difference was, whether she complied with a good or with a reluctant grace to his will.

"She asked but one question:

"Would Mr. Osborne accompany them?"

Her guardian's brow darkened, and the reply, if satisfactory, was sharp and stern:

"No," then as he saw Edith's look of relief and satisfaction, he added, "but he will not be long, Edith. You need not distress yourself; he will not be long."

The girl turned proudly away.

She was aware from long experience how useless would be mere words. Her determination had been long taken, but she would prove it in deeds.

Mr. Mordaunt's plans were usually matured long before they were commenced, so in the present instance all was ready for departure some twenty-four hours after he had told Edith to prepare for leaving Homburg. The farewell calls were made. A few cards were despatched; a few notes, the contents of which were unknown to the young girl, were written previous to the hurried journey. Probably "urgent affairs," or "sudden illness" was the cause assigned.

Mr. Mordaunt was not one to court scandal when a smooth white lie would avert it, but they left late in the evening, travelled post with four horses till they reached Rotterdam, and then went on board, also in the dusk of extreme and closing twilight.

Mr. Mordaunt had, from chance or design, chosen a boat that not only left Rotterdam in the obscure twilight of a November evening, but arrived in England at an early hour, long ere the sun rose in

our English November morning, and thus there was little chance of either the embarking or the landing being viewed by others. But, apparently, there was the same intention and the same wish shared by others as well as himself, for almost at the same moment that Mr. Mordaunt and Edith, with the two servants who accompanied them, stepped on board, the tall figure of a man, wrapped in a thick, large cloak that entirely concealed his features, passed from the bow over the sides of the vessel and landed almost at the very side of the young girl.

Edith had preceded her guardian a few steps, Mr. Mordaunt having lingered to give his directions about the luggage, and was standing near the cabin when this apparition suddenly attracted her attention. Perhaps she would not have even looked at the new comer, after the first involuntary glance, had not the extreme concealment of his features excited a natural curiosity.

It is, of course, a decided failing, but still a natural quality of human nature, to endeavour to discover what appears to be hidden from us. And Edith—albeit one of the most refined, and most remarkable of her sex, in spite of her defective and irregular education, was yet instinctively led to glance yet again at the muffled stranger who stood for a moment, so near that the light from the cabin flashed alike on his figure, and on her features. Edith could see that he was earnestly returning her gaze. And yet, though her colour rose, she could not instantly take her eyes from him. The eyes and the nose were indeed all that she could distinguish. Not very recognisable, certainly, when the rest of the face was completely concealed, and in spite of the author of Brambletye House, who incessantly describes the "large lustrous black eyes" of his heroine as the sole indication of her presence, we respectfully beg to doubt that even the most familiar face would be actually recognised in that manner. Yet there was an undefinable attraction in those features which were visible to Edith, that at any rate recalled to her those of one, who had a sufficient interest in her heart to account for the fancy.

And they were peculiar, those deep, violet blue eyes, a tint rarely seen in man or woman either. And the long black lashes that shaded them were yet more remarkable. Perhaps the whole examination did not last a moment. Then the stranger moved—almost unconsciously, or rather appeared about to move, nearer to the young girl.

But at that instant the firm, heavy tread of her guardian was heard. The stranger, terrified, drew back in the darker part of the vessel, and noiselessly glided from the spot.

Edith mechanically obeyed her guardian's suggestion to go at once to her cabin. But she could not resist another glance at the place where the figure had stood, before she descended the stairs. It was empty. Still she thought that she could discern his shadow in the distance, and that the face was steadfastly turned towards her.

It might be imagination. But if so, it was so vivid as to impress itself on her mind with the force of reality. She sought her berth, for the wind was freshening almost to a gale, and it was decidedly the most eligible place for a fresh-water sailor. But she did not sleep; the steps that moved slowly and firmly above her had a sort of unconquerable attraction in their tread. She fancied it was the mysterious stranger who thus paced the deck, and the memories that were once dead, were stirred up strangely within her.

Hour after hour passed. The wind which had been at its height during the night slackened its fury as the morning dawned.

Edith's maid did not appear. Doubtless she suffered the usual curse of the Frenchwoman—the "*mal du mer*"—and her young mistress determined to dispense with her services.

It was no easy task to dress, with the vessel still tumbling and rolling about in the surging sea. But she was not very fastidious in the toilette she made, and soon fulfilled her intention of stepping on deck to breathe the fresh air of morning.

She had wrapped a thick cloak around her, but yet the morning struck somewhat chill after the close warmth of her cabin. But the breeze was yet refreshing, and it was a rare pleasure to watch the sun rise at sea, and she felt and stumbled her way till she came near to the wheel, where she could support herself against the still lurching waves. The mists were rolling away, and her eyes soon got accustomed to the imperfect light, and could discern objects near her with tolerable distinctness.

Edith involuntarily glanced around to see if the stranger was on deck. It was easily decided, for the passengers were nearly all of them in the cabin, and many wrapped in slumber at that early hour. But in the distance, within some four or five yards from her, she could distinguish a tall form, wrapped in the cloak that had enveloped the unknown on the previous night.

Edith moved by degrees somewhat closer.

He was gazing on the sea, in the direction where they were steering, and his face was averted from her—so that she did not fear his observing her approach. For some moments she stood motionless and still, within reach of his strong arms, her eyes

fixed intently to catch one glimpse that should decide her doubts. Chance favoured her.

There was a sudden, distant cry floating on the water, a cry from some far away ship, probably injured by the violence of the wind.

The stranger instantly removed his cloak from his face.

His features were visible for a moment. Only a moment. But it was enough.

Edith's doubts were removed. And a faint smothered cry escaped her, that at once attracted the unknown's attention.

"Cecil!"

"Edith!"

Then a hurried glance around. A brief, lightning-like embrace. And the cloak was folded more closely than ever round the features.

"Cecil, why this disguise—this mystery?" she asked hurriedly.

"I am in danger, Edith."

"Then why return here?"

"Because I am perhaps safer here than abroad. Where is your uncle?"

"Downstairs in the cabin."

"He must not recognise me, Edith darling. It would be certain and complete ruin. Tell me, is there any means of communicating with you?"

"I fear none," she said sadly. "I do not even know where we are going."

"Nor I," he repeated bitterly. "Fugitives have no home. But, Edith, my own love, at least I am true for ever to you, and you are to me, are you not, Edith?"

"Till death, Cecil."

"Bless you, my own! I believe you. And now the only service that you can do me, Edith, is, if possible, to give this to my sister. You know her residence. Go to her, if you are in London. Tell her that it was too late—too late; that I am tracked, hunted, and for her sake will not bring more grief on her if it can be averted. Let her trust me, and strive to keep brave for my sake. Will you do this, Edith?"

"Yes."

"And, my darling, only promise me one thing, promise that so long as my fate is uncertain, so long as it remains possible that I may claim you as mine, you will never, never forget—never be faithless to me."

"I do promise," she said; "but, oh, Cecil, is the danger so very great?"

"I cannot deny it, Edith; but you must be brave and hopeful. And remember that I may have been mad, reckless, but never criminal. Whatever you hear, will you remember that, Edith?"

"For ever, dear Cecil. And now I must leave you, lest we may attract observation. For heaven's sake, be careful! Are your plans organised when we land, Cecil?"

"Scarcely, but be content. I have weathered worse dangers than these. Heaven bless you, my Edith, I may claim you yet, if you are true and patient."

As he spoke distant footsteps were heard, and in another moment Edith had sprang from his side and resumed her old place by the wheel. Her heart was beating tumultuously, and her limbs trembled too violently to support her, had not the friendly wheel given her its aid. She watched Cecil from beneath her thick veil, and wondered how she could ever have doubted his identity.

Would others be equally clear sighted? That was the terrible doubt!

She heard the steps coming nearer and nearer. It was Mr. Mordaunt; she knew the tread from a thousand, and she forced herself to meet him with apparent cordiality, and give the morning salutation.

"Well, Edith, have you been afraid?" he asked.

"Yes, extremely," she replied.

He looked searchingly at her.

"Well, you do look somewhat pale and fluttered; I thought you had more bravery in you than that. It was but a light squall; no danger whatever."

"Perhaps!"

"Were you ill, Edith?"

"A little," she replied again, anxious to account for her agitation, and willing to give Cecil time to move naturally from his post; "were not you? Fentin has deserted me; I suppose she is still in her berth."

"And what brought you on deck so soon?" he asked, sharply.

His look was purposely or accidentally bent on the now retreating form of Cecil.

"I do not like you to be here alone, Edith," he added sharply; "remember that. It is not proper, and decidedly against my orders. Let me take you to your cabin."

"Thank you, I would rather remain on deck; I presume there is no objection when you are here," she replied, with a tinge of scorn in her accents. "I shall only be ill in the cabin."

Mr. Mordaunt looked decidedly displeased; but there was little pretext for insisting on her obedience at the moment, and he remained, leaning on the deck at her side, and, as she fancied, his eyes fixed on the spot where Cecil had last disappeared.

The hours wore away wearily for the girl. It was but a brief interval ere the little voyage would be at an end. The white cliffs of England were in sight; the busy town of Harwich already came distinctly in view.

Another half hour and Cecil would again be separated from her; but, at least, he would be free and once more safe from the jealous, curious eyes of her guardian; and she counted the moments till the steamer should glide into the harbour and the critical instant of landing be past.

"Is all ready," she asked. "I shall be so glad to be on shore again. I am faint and weary."

Mr. Mordaunt looked earnestly at her.

"You are not wont to be so fine ladyish in your habits, Edith. I am afraid I have spoiled you, since the days when—"

A lightning glance from her blue eyes stopped him.

"Beware," she said passionately; "beware, you do not know me yet. You do not know what I am capable, if you push me too far. It is but common courtesy that I ask, and I expect it to be granted."

And she drew up her slight form with the air of a princess.

The man at her side could scarcely resist that involuntary superiority.

He had to an extent power over that fair young creature. He had as it were bought her for his slave, and he had well and dearly repaid himself for the rescue, to which he so often alluded. But the submission of mind, the superiority of feeling and taste, the refinement of soul, could not be purchased. And Edith's high spirit was at times a galling and mortifying rebuke and obstacle to her self-styled guardian.

Still his eyes moved restlessly over the vessel. Edith's very eagerness to leave the ship had been incautions.

The suspicions of her tyrant had been raised, and could not soon be dispelled.

But luckily, at the very moment when the vessel neared the shore, Fentin and the male servant, who constituted their suite, appeared on deck.

The former had her young lady's belongings in the shape of bags, wraps, and stray books, &c., on her arm, and the man-servant respectfully announced that all was ready.

"You wished to catch the eight thirty train for London, sir, and it is past eight now, so we shall not have much time to spare."

The argument was irresistible.

Mr. Mordaunt gave a half-savage glance at the averted face of his ward.

But he could scarcely contradict his own words and plans.

And he silently signified his pleasure that the baggage should be prepared for landing at once. Then, offering his arm to Edith, he led her towards the gangway of the boat, which now had touched the pier, and was ready for discharging its passengers. The girl hurried rather than retarded his footsteps.

They passed through the group collected near the spot, but less prepared for actual leaving the vessel (which by the way is commonly the case with these boat travellers), and in another moment would have been on shore.

But their progress was arrested by two men in respectable, private clothes, though bearing a rather suspiciously authoritative appearance.

"Excuse me sir," one said to Mr. Mordaunt, "but I cannot let anyone leave the vessel till I have seen the whole of the passengers. I have a warrant," he added, significantly. "It will only be a few minutes delay, probably, but my duty is imperative."

And the man respectfully waved his hand towards the vessel in silent confirmation of his words.

Edith's face and lips were very white, and the officer's suspicious might well have been excited by her emotion, only that he knew perfectly well that the description that he carried of the suspected person could not possibly apply to the gentleman before him.

The proceeding was simply an official one, not any idea that a man of five feet eight could be one of six feet, nor that twenty-two could easily be turned into fifty-eight.

Mr. Mordaunt quietly returned on his steps.

"Edith, you had better go in the cabin," he said.

"No, no!" she replied, impatiently. "It would stifle me. I cannot."

And she clung resolutely to his arm. It was a far longer delay than the officer had promised. There were several passengers to be examined, and the whole of the vessel to be searched, before the em-

bargo could be removed on their landing.

The chief part of them, indeed, were assembled on deck, but after a minute comparison of the respective faces and figures with the paper in his hand, the officer could not but confess that the wildest flight of imagination could not detect any likeness between them. The list of passengers was then run over by his practical eye.

"I see there is one still wanting, Captain Manners. Have you landed any on your way?"

"None."

"Then either you came away with one less than your registrar, or he is in some part of the vessel not yet visited," observed the officer, coolly.

The captain looked half alarmed. Nothing is more repugnant to the naval mind than any legal threats or proceedings.

"I don't believe there's a cranny unsearched," he said, "unless he's in the boilers. You can look there if you like."

"He may be in the engine-room, certainly," replied the officer, coolly. "I left that till the last. It is not pleasant to pull a gentleman out of a corner, like a rat. And it is a gentleman we are after, captain, whatever the end of it."

The man was just turning to execute his purpose, when the tall figure of Cecil Rivers suddenly stepped from behind a large sail that had been flapping idly since the gale subsided.

"You shall not," he said, laughingly, "you shall not have your fine feelings outraged, Mr. Officer. But if you are not a better gentleman than you are a finder your prisoners must soon escape from your clutches. I was within a dozen yards all the time you were searching. What is the meaning of all this disturbance?"

"Then you confess it—you confess it!" said the man, eagerly.

"Confess! I do not understand you," repeated Cecil, laughingly.

"Confess that you are the man we want," he repeated, laying his hand rudely on Cecil's arm.

"By no means. Only that I am the missing passenger," replied the young man. "And as I, and I daresay the rest of these ladies and gentlemen are in haste, perhaps you will explain a little more clearly what the disturbance is about?"

The man had hastily compared the paper that he held with Cecil's features.

"Um, yes—six feet, slight built, about twenty-two or three, violet eyes, dark brown hair, clear skin, good teeth, nose rather large. Yes, all right—found."

And he gave a significant nod to his companion.

"Cecil Rivers, you are my prisoner," he added, laying his hand on his arm.

"On what charge?"

"Forgery—to a large extent."

Cecil's surprise was either genuine or admirably feigned.

"Forgery! You are mad!"

"Can't help it, sir. If all's right, you'll soon be free again, and, as the beaks say, without a stain on your character. But it's not often such mistakes are made, you see. Ladies and gentlemen, I need not detain you any longer," he added, with a bow that would not have disgraced a gentleman, to the anxious and awe-stricken group.

All had listened with eager curiosity and interest. But there was one whose very breath had been suspended, and whose limbs had shaken like a powerless reed during the brief dialogue.

Cecil's eyes had wandered sharply round till they rested on the pale, shrieking form of Edith, even while the terrible words were sounding in his ears.

The girl saw it. She forgot all—the assembled group, the officers of justice, and her guardian's wrath. She drew her arm from his with a sudden movement for which he was too unprepared to prevent, and darted to Cecil's side.

"Cecil, Cecil, must you go with them? You are innocent, are you not? Only say that you are, and I will bless you, and believe in you as myself!"

An inexpressible tenderness beamed from his violet eyes, as he gazed on her for a moment.

"Be content, Edith. This absurd charge will soon be disproved. I am as innocent as yourself. Leave me now," he added, in a yet lower tone; "you can but do harm to all by remaining. You shall hear soon."

She drew back and slowly returned to Mr. Mordaunt's side. Perhaps for the moment she was somewhat chilled, though her judgment could not but acknowledge that he was right. And the next moment she heard a voice in the crowd above.

"It's no go, that's certain. An innocent man doesn't stalk about, as he's done all the passage, and hide himself behind a sack at last, till he was fathomed out. No, it's a clear case, that's my idea."

Mr. Mordaunt's look of calm triumph, as he received back his ward, was, perhaps, more grievous still. He



scarcely uttered a word of reproach, as he drew her hand in his arm once more.

"Now, Edith, your impatience to land can be gratified," he said; "and, to do you justice, you do look sad, as if you would be better sheltered from observation. It is well that we have no acquaintances on board."

And he half-led, half-supported the girl on, and placed her in the nearest carriage that could be procured for them.

"You have satisfied yourself, I hope," he said cheerfully, when they drove off to an hotel, till the next train left for London. "You are satisfied that I have a little more discernment than yourself, and that my choice for you is more discreet than a fiction."

She did not reply, save by the few slowly pronounced words.

"Yes, I am satisfied, about you and him."

Meanwhile the crowd had wonderingly and slowly dispersed. The officers had hurried Cecil on shore in the vague hope of catching the first train. And in less than half an hour the occurrence had ceased to occupy the tongues, or even the thoughts of the idle witnesses of the scene.

So true it is, that the heart may break, that every hope and joy in life may be destroyed at one fell blow. And yet that our fellow beings will scarcely pause from their round of pleasure, care and duty to bestow a serious thought, a real expression of feeling on the sufferer. And it is well that it is so. Life is too much a scene of varied trial and suffering to permit of its being increased by such share in the horrors of others. And the chosen few—the companions—the friends—the relations, many whom we love, and in whom we have our affections and interests centred, can afford to grieve when we grieve—to smile when we smile—to laugh when we laugh. And can they—the dearest and the nearest do it?

"Show half the reason why we smile and sigh."

Only one—the Almighty—the Omniscient—the Omnipotent can see and judge, and know the vice of a world, and not sink under the weight.

Happy those who feel this truth, who realise this power, who know the comfort of trusting in Him who can pity and help, and in His own time deliver all who trust him. It is hard to do this, hard to feel submission, hope and trust, when all is dark, and threatening and ominous. But it is a most blessed want when this victory is gained. But poor Edith and it yet to learn. She was brave and true. But she was yet to be schooled in deeper sobriety ere she could acquire the yet more feminine virtues of patience and of truth.

## CHAPTER XXVII.

"Oh, if you knew the pensive pleasure  
That fills my bosom when I sigh,  
You would not rob me of a treasure  
Monarchs are too poor to buy."

Rogers.

EVELYN RIVERS had just parted with Oliver Danvers after a grave and silent breakfast. Little had passed between them during the meal. For she thought that some crisis was about to happen during the day, from her cousin's pre-occupied airs and abstracted looks.

He had promised that so soon as it was possible, she would know all that was threatening him, and she would not pain him by a word—a look, till he deemed it fit to confide more entirely in her.

She knew that a fearful and ominous blow threatened, and it was enough that she nerved herself for the trial without too anxiously inquiring of what nature and extent it might prove.

Mrs. Brunton was worse than nothing. Her uncle was as one dead, and the nurse, to whom she felt so strange and inexplicable an attraction, cold, and pale, silent as she was, appeared entirely absorbed in her attentions to the invalid.

Evelyn was indeed alone. But seventeen, and the petted darling of other days, the pride of the saloons, and the heroine of newspaper accounts of *fetes* and *balls*, was, in the very spring time and zenith of her youth and beauty, crushed and tested by the worst trials that could afflict the matured and the experienced.

There was but one power that could support her—one means, one earthly power, and that was at once the sword that pierced and the staff that supported her. It was her love for Oliver Danvers!

The hours wore on, on that weary morning; each tick of the clock seemed torture to her excited nerves. It was at once tedious and rapid. Tedious in prolonging suspense and weary waiting; rapid in bringing slowly out surely the crisis to its utmost height.

On, on, the minutes and hours passed. Steadily and unvarying they went on, bringing in their train the fate of individuals, of families, of empires, of the world.

An awful and an uncontrollable thing is time. Talk

of the power of steam, of electricity, of fire, of water; they may be managed, governed, guarded against, but time laughs at man's helpless weakness. And, alas, alas, men heed not, fear not Time's great and irresistible power.

Perhaps Evelyn insensibly felt this as she sat there, in her solitude, mute and motionless, lost in deep, unconscious thought; but the thoughts, if thoughts they were, did not arrange themselves in words nor tangible ideas.

Evelyn had but one idea that pervaded her whole system! Fears for Oliver, love for Oliver, eager desire for his return, envious longing to share alike his sorrow and his danger! Woman, woman! well it is said that thou art "made for man." For, when a true, and deep, and engrossing love once fills thine heart it swallows up and neutralises every other hope, interest, and joy.

It was, perhaps, midday. Evelyn had distinguished the hall bell, then the sound of steps. Was it her cousin returned? Her heart beat tumultuously; it was something too soon for any good, any way; something too soon for him to have arranged the affairs that had apparently weighed so crushingly on him.

Perhaps some strange reverse, some magic stroke had removed any cause for alarm. So speedy a conclusion spoke of failure rather than success. She waited a few moments, then she hastily moved to the door. There was a sound, a distant sound of footsteps. She started, listened, and laid her hand on the handle of the door, just as it turned in the lock, and Lisette entered to request that a young lady, on urgent business, might be admitted to Miss Evelyn's presence.

"What name?" the girl asked, eagerly.

"She will not give it, Miss Eva; she says you would not know it, but that her business is of life and death. I was to say so if you hesitated."

Evelyn shuddered, the words seemed so ominous.

"What is she like?"

"She is young, and a lady, Miss Eva, but I never saw her before."

The idea that it might be Marie Wentworth flashed over the girl's mind. There was, truth to tell, a vague jealousy about that young and beautiful girl in her heart.

She had always fancied that if Oliver could admire anyone but herself, to whom he had spoken and avowed his love, that Marie was that one; and, like all loving women, she liked not even the shadow of a rival near the throne.

"Show her in, Lizzie," she said, at length; "show her in. I will see her for a few minutes, though I am far too ill to be detained long, tell her."

"Indeed, and that is true, Miss Evelyn; you are as white as a sheet, and yet you have got a spot burning in your cheeks, and your eyes look all glittering. I think you have got a bad cold, Miss Evelyn."

"No," she said, "no; only a headache. But be quick, Lizzie."

The girl retired, and in a moment returned with the guest who had thus craved admission.

The veil was down; but the light and quaint appearance were not very unlike Marie's.

And when Lizzie had retired, and the visitor prepared to lift the veil that concealed her features, Evelyn fully expected to see the *piquante* face of the sparkling little heiress. But instead of the glittering dark eyes, and the foreign looking face of the little Marie, the fair transparent skin, the golden hair, and the bright expressive blue eyes of the young girl to whom she had once seen Oliver speak to in the park—met her view.

It was not indeed so bright and so glowing as she had then seen it, when the sunny glances had been thrown at her cousin.

Still it was very lovely—very lovely, childlike and sweet. And Evelyn's heart warmed while it sickened at the sight—and re-called the message:

"On life or death."

The door had closed, and the two girls were quite alone, ere either of them spoke.

Then Evelyn said gently:

"May I not know the name of my visitor?"

"I have no name," said the girl, sadly; "I have no name. Be content, Miss Rivers, that I have come only to do good, if I can, to one most dear to you."

Evelyn flushed painfully.

"Whom—whom do you mean," she said. "Not whom?"

"I said one most dear, or who ought to be most dear," repeated the girl, "can you not guess?"

"Alas—alas."

Evelyn was a devoted sister, but at that moment the visage of Oliver was so completely before her that she had no room for any other; and Cecil was so far distant. It was so long since she had heard from him that it perhaps somewhat dimmed the vividness of his memory in her heart.

"Speak," she said at length, sadly, collecting herself sufficiently not to risk a betrayal of her secret. "Speak; do you allude to my—my cousin? or—"

The young guest's lips parted in a half mournful smile.

"Alas, alas!" she murmured, "alas, alas!"

Then, turning again to Evelyn, she said with a half reproachful yet gentle tone:

"Or your brother, you would say. I can well understand your feelings, Miss Rivers, though, perhaps, I might have expected that you would have had an only brother first in your heart. But that brother is noble and good, I know that, and deserves all you can give him of esteem and affection. Still Cecil Rivers is your nearest blood and kin, and he is in danger—great and imminent danger."

(To be continued.)

## THE HAMPTON MYSTERY.

### CHAPTER XXXVI.

I had rather chop this hand off at a blow,  
And with the other fling it at thy face,  
Than bear so low a sail, to strike to thee!

Shakespeare.

As we have said, Lord Adlowe burst into the drawing-room of the Laurels with the resistless rush of a tornado.

Closing the door behind him, and locking it in the face of the frightened Meggy Fleck, he leaned against it, glaring around him like a tiger.

The Lady Beatrice and the self-styled Spanish count arose from the sofa at his entrance—the former white with horror, the cry of terror still quivering on her lips, her manner gathering a desperate defiance like some hunted creature turning at bay. The countenance of the latter was instinct with a haughty surprise and questioning sternness.

The two boys had retired.

The cousins—rivals all their lives—bitter enemies now—looked each other full in the face.

Adlowe searched in vain those dark and unfamiliar features for some sign of recognition or fear.

The wronged Geoffrey Trevalyan had anticipated too long such an hour as this not to be prepared for it. Despite the lapse of years since their last meeting, he recognised his cousin at once—recognised him with a chill foreboding, and a deadly sinking at the heart. Yet astonishment and anger at the singular intrusion were the only emotions expressed by his mobile and well-trained features.

"What means this strange intrusion?" he demanded, in a strong foreign accent, with haughtiness of look and tone.

Lord Adlowe looked from one to the other of the couple in sudden bewilderment and confusion.

The looks, the manner, the speech, the appearance of Count Arevalo were so unlike those of his wronged cousin, that Adlowe's faith in his identity received a sudden shock.

The Lady Beatrice, whose eyes were fixed upon him with an eager look of utter desperation, saw his lordship's face change, and marked the uneasy expression that came into his pale eyes. In an instant she began to recover her courage. Her manner grew decidedly defiant, and thoroughly self-possessed.

"You are a good actor, Geoffrey Trevalyan!" declared Adlowe, with a hard and bitter sneer. "I never saw a better on the stage. But you cannot deceive me!"

The pretended count looked puzzled, but still surprised.

"Geoffrey Trevalyan!" he repeated, with his strong assumed accent. "Be kind enough to speak plainly, senator. Or, better, leave us. You are mad—intoxicated—"

Adlowe turned from the count with a gesture of disgust, fixing his venomous eyes on the Lady Beatrice.

"You, at least, make no attempt to mystify me," he said, a demon's joy lighting up his face. "I have discovered your secret, Beatrice Hampton! I have probed to the bottom the strange mystery of your life. I know now the reason of your celibacy, so called—the cause of your mysterious seclusions and absences. You are a wife in secret. You are a mother. What will your proud father and the gay world say of my discovery?"

A sudden emotion convulsed the perfect features of the Lady Beatrice. She put out her hand blindly and caught at the back of a chair, leaning heavily upon it. An instant later, however, she recovered herself, arched her haughty neck, and said, coldly:

"Do your worst, Lord Adlowe. I scorn and defy you!"

"And your father? And the world?"

"I have long been prepared for such an hour as this," responded the Lady Beatrice, with haughty calmness. "In an hour I can be on my way to France."

"And leave your father, the poor old earl, to bear his trouble, and the sneers and jeers of people alone," said Lord Adlowe, tauntingly. "And your Spanish senor—will he go too?"

"He will go where I go," said the Lady Beatrice firmly. "Lord Adlowe, Senor Arevalo is my husband. The boys whom you saw through the window are mine. I have been married many years. You have surprised my secret in a manner appropriate to your character—base spy that you are. Now, as I said before, do your worst."

"My worst," repeated Adlowe significantly.

"Your very worst! Proclaim to the world that I have been for many years a wife and mother, while passing for an unmarried woman. Break down my father's pride—humble him to the very dust—break his heart if you will," and her voice trembled suddenly; "but know that you will fail in your dearest schemes. You will never humble or break the heart of Beatrice Hampton. You cannot rob her of her husband's love or of her boys. And if you can find one stain on the name of Antonio Arevalo, proclaim that also. As to me," she added, "I do not find my happiness in society. I should be supremely contented to live with my dear ones in some foreign land, and never see England again, since it is not in the country but in my home I find my happiness."

"Indeed!" said Adlowe, with an intonation of wonder, for he could not dissociate in his thoughts the Lady Beatrice from the society where she had so long reigned a star and queen. "You will come out in a new character, then. You a model wife and mother! You a housekeeper!" and he sneered. "As well look for an eagle in a dove's nest. But about the 'senor'! If we can find no stain on the name of 'Antonio Arevalo,' we shall find a pretty large one on that of Geoffrey Trevalyan."

"That name again," said the pretended count, impatiently. "What have I to do with your friend?"

"My enemy!" corrected Adlowe, his eyes flaming with sudden hatred. "My enemy to the death. The man who stole from me the love of the woman for whom I have waited these eighteen years. The man who lives to come between me and a noble inheritance for which I have striven hard all my life long. Oh, curse him!" and he ground his teeth savagely, and glared at the husband of the Lady Beatrice with a look of concentrated fury and hatred. "The base robber! The cowardly intending assassin of the uncle who loved him."

The pretended count faced Adlowe with an air of command, flashes of indignant light leaping from the blue eyes under his dark brows. His countenance grew strangely stern, and he exclaimed haughtily:

"Have you done? Spy and madman that you are. Leave my house. Leave it at once, or I will expel you with my own hands!"

A cool and insolent smile chased the anxious expression from Adlowe's features.

"It would be the worst day's work you ever did, Geoffrey Trevalyan, if you succeeded in expelling me," he said, significantly. "Come; I know you, despite your clever disguise. I know you by the fact that the Lady Beatrice Hampton would have wedded no other than her early love."

The count uttered no disclaimer, but a smile that puzzled the intruder played for a moment about his bearded lips.

Adlowe moved uneasily, and communed with himself, keeping a watchful eye on his antagonists.

The Lady Beatrice drew nearer to her husband, who smiled upon her, and gently wreathed his arm around her waist. He felt her heart fluttering like a frightened bird in its cage, although outwardly she seemed so resolute and defiant.

The manner of Adlowe, which grow every instant more menacing and insolent, began to inspire them with a growing apprehension. The count swept a rapid glance at the windows in search of hostile faces. The idea occurred to him that Adlowe might have officers in waiting without to arrest him.

The Lady Beatrice noticed her husband's glance, and comprehended his unspoken fear. Quitting his encouraging embrace, she went to the window, opened it, and looked out. There was no one to be seen in the shadowy garden. Her fears quieted, she left the window open, and returned to her husband's side.

"I came here alone," said Adlowe, compelling her ladyship's movement. "A detective in my employ traced the Lady Beatrice here. I have a key to your garden gate, and admitted myself. No one but the detective suspects that I am here, or that Senor Arevalo is no other than Geoffrey Trevalyan. My uncle does not dream that his hated nephew still lives. Now let us understand each other. I believe you, Senor Arevalo, as you call yourself, to be my cousin Geoffrey Trevalyan. The fact is plain to my own mind. If I were to denounce you to my uncle he would transport you. You would die of the shame and disgrace, but you would leave sons to inherit your title and estates. You see that I recognise all the obstacles between me and the property I have so long considered as my own. And now," he added, turning his blood-shot eyes from one to the other of his enemies and victims, "I offer you a truce. I will make a bargain with you. Which shall it be between us; peace or war—a war to the death?"

The count was gravely silent, but his eyes seemed to read the soul of the scheming profligate before him.

"How can there be peace between us?" asked the Lady Beatrice, suspiciously. "Can the lion and the lamb lie down together?"

"I will explain," declared Adlowe. "Granting that Senor Arevalo is my cousin Geoffrey—I say, granting it, Lady Beatrice—you know that he must keep his existence hidden from my uncle during Lord Trevalyan's lifetime. After his lordship's death, Geoffrey can come forward and claim his own. I will keep Geoffrey's existence a secret, granting, as I said, that Senor Arevalo is Geoffrey, and I will undertake to disabuse my uncle's mind of its prejudices—for a consideration."

"What consideration?" asked the Lady Arevalo, guardedly.

Adlowe shuffled a little as if uneasy, smiled, and said:

"You have a daughter?"

The father started, and his brows contracted. A look of gathering terror appeared on the face of the Lady Beatrice.

"I refer to Giralda," said the profligate lord, coolly. "I have but just returned from my uncle's, where I have seen her. She has her father's eyes. You sent her to the Park to win the old man's love, and to smooth the way for her father's return. Well, she has succeeded in winning Lord Trevalyan's love and all the money he is able to leave from the estate. The Park looks as it used to, with servants and a better style of living than it has seen since the quarrel of eighteen years ago. Giralda has it all her own way there. But to come to the point. Your daughter is young, spirited, lovely in disposition, with a beauty that is perfectly marvellous. I never saw a more bewitching face in all my travels. She is like her mother, but with less of coldness and haughtiness, and more of fire and glow."

"Well?" demanded the pretended count, hoarsely.

The Lady Beatrice held closely the back of the chair before her, a deathly faintness creeping over her.

"Since the Lady Beatrice is lost to me by her marriage," said Adlowe, "I will elevate her lovely daughter to the pedestal in my heart which her ladyship has vacated. In other words, give me Giralda for my wife, and I will keep your secret, and endeavour to effect Geoffrey's reconciliation with my uncle. But understand, I must be recompensed for the estates of which Geoffrey's existence robs me. Lord Trevalyan's sixty thousand pounds, settled on Giralda, must be increased by a full half of the private fortune of the Lady Beatrice. On these terms I agree to a lasting peace."

He looked up as if he felt himself master of the situation.

The Lady Beatrice uttered a low moan, and put out her hands towards her husband.

He took them both in his strong grasp, looking brave and undaunted, and said quietly, but with a dignity and decision that were more effective than loud tones:

"My lord, I beg to decline the alliance you propose to us. My daughter is too young to marry. And, were she not, I should never attempt to force her inclinations."

"Oh, I would see her in her grave before I would see her Lord Adlowe's wife," cried the Lady Beatrice, with passionate emphasis. "My poor little girl. My noble, pure Giralda."

A disagreeable smile curved Adlowe's mouth.

"You prefer war, then?" he said. "But do not decide yet. I have more to tell. I have been down to Trevalyan Park, as I said. In fact, I left there last night, arriving in town this morning. Yesterday,

not being then informed of the detective's discovery, and making sure of Giralda's identity, I offered myself to her, and assured her that her marriage with me would be her father's only chance of safety."

"What did she say?" questioned the Lady Beatrice. "She put on the airs of a duchess, and refused me. She said that she could not sacrifice herself, could not do wrong, even to save her father."

"Noble girl!" the father muttered under his breath, his face lighting up with a thankful glow.

"That is not all," said the mother, anxiously.

"What else have you to tell, Lord Adlowe?"

That disagreeable smile on Adlowe's lips deepened now to one of triumph.

"Your daughter," he said, "had formed the project of stealing away from the park after nightfall, intending to walk to Trevalyan village and to catch the evening train. She also intended to telegraph a warning to you. I read her resolve in her eyes. As I was leaving her, I received the detective's dispatch, hurrying me back to town. My course was settled upon at once. I procured a light waggon from the village, and had it in readiness. Soon after dusk, according to my calculations, Miss Giralda stole out, on her way to the village. I and my man followed with the waggon. We overtook her on the road, and found her crouching by a tree or stone, where she hid at our approach."

"My poor girl!" cried the Lady Beatrice, tortured and anguished.

A gleam shot from Adlowe's eyes.

"We stopped the waggon and took the young lady prisoner," he resumed, coolly. "I bound her to the seat, and sent her away to a safe asylum. She is there now, a prisoner."

"Oh, my heavens!" wailed the stricken mother. "Better that she were in the den of a lion than in your power, Ormond Adlowe."

She sank down on the sofa, quivering in frame, her senses in a whirl.

The disguised Geoffrey Trevalyan looked stunned by this unexpected blow.

"The price of Giralda's freedom is her marriage with me," said Adlowe, remorselessly. "She shall never leave her living tomb save as my wife. You must see for yourself that this marriage will be the best thing for her. She will never have another chance to secure a respectable husband. You are versed in the cruel ways of the world, Lady Beatrice. You know that I have only to circulate the story of Giralda's mysterious disappearance to blight her fair name for ever. People are quick to believe bad reports. And so, if you prefer war, you may add to Geoffrey's threatened transportation your daughter's blighted name and blighted life."

He looked at them now, smiling like a fiend.

Again a low wail broke from the mother's lips. The words of Adlowe had fallen upon her quivering soul like heavy whip-strokes upon raw and bleeding flesh.

The face of the pretended count glowed with an awful indignation. His eyes flashed like gleaming coals. His breath came quick through his parted lips.

"Seoundrel!" he cried, leaping forward, carried away by his passion. "You shall never go farther in your demon's work!"

He sprang upon Adlowe seizing him in a fierce grip as if he would tear him in pieces. Adlowe shook in his frenzied grasp, unable to withstand him, and uttered a cry of terror.

The Lady Beatrice bounded forward, and caught her husband's arm.

"Oh, stop!" she exclaimed, in anguish. "Our child! The secret of her prison will die with him. Adlowe, where is she? Where is Giralda?"

The count relaxed his grasp, and questioned the profligate lord with haggard eyes.

"Where is she?" he whispered hollowly, shaking Adlowe as if he had been a dog. "Where is my daughter?"

"That you shall know when I can present her to you as my wife—not before," declared Adlowe, with chattering teeth, his cowardly soul quailing before the storm he had raised. "Kill me if you will, Geoffrey Trevalyan, but with me will die your last chance of ever beholding your child again."

The count, half unconsciously, shook Adlowe again, and more fiercely.

"I ought to kill you, Ormond Adlowe!" he cried, his eyes blazing. "Wretch that you are! your life has been one long series of wrong-doing. Viper! let me tell you who I am!" and he gripped him more tightly. "I am Geoffrey Trevalyan whom you have wronged and traduced. I am that Geoffrey Trevalyan against whom you have alienated his uncle's heart; whom you have driven from his right-



ful home; whom you have forced to lead a secret and hidden existence, under an assumed name and an assumed character. You have persecuted my noble and honoured wife. You have persecuted my daughter. And at last, Ormond Adlowe, at last we meet face to face, disguises swept aside."

He flung Adlowe from him violently, and confronted him with a face of awful sternness.

"I am Geoffrey Trevalyan," he repeated, the concentrated bitterness of years finding expression in his voice. "Remove me from your path, base schemer, and two stand in my place, my noble boys, to keep from you the estates of Trevalyan. Your schemes have all been vain and useless. Now plot and scheme, and do your worst. Set the detectives on my track! Bring the officers to arrest me! But first, let me show you that I have not lost my old strength of arm."

All his wrongs rushed upon Geoffrey Trevalyan's soul in one wild stream. He leaped towards the quaking profligate, caught him in his arms, bore him to the open window, and threw him out with a violence that was terrific.

"Now go!" he said—"go, and bear in mind that I defy you."

The Lady Beatrice tottered forward, fell on her knees by the window, and threw up her arms wildly. "Oh, my child! my child!" she cried. "Lost to us now for ever."

She fell forward, fainting and unconscious. Her agonised husband bent to gather her up in his arms, and at that moment a hoarse and mocking cry was borne to his ears, coming from the garden shadows, sounding like the cry of a triumphant demon.

"Ah, you defy me!" was the burden of the cry, in the voice of Lord Adlowe. "So be it. And now you shall feel the storm you have drawn down on yourself. First, your arrest. Second, your wife's disgrace. Third, to make love to the fair Giralda. I go now, but my vengeance will fall soon, and heavily."

There followed a rushing sound among the trees, as if the discomfited villain were blindly forcing his way among them, regardless of the path, in his wild haste for vengeance.

# CHAPTER XXXVII.

What can I pay thee for this noble usage  
But grateful praise? So heaven itself is paid.  
Rome.

With the menace of Lord Adlowe ringing in his ears, Geoffrey Trevalyan lifted his unconscious wife and laid her on a sofa. She looked as if dead, and a wild fear possessed him that her soul had, indeed, fled. He chafed her hands, bathed her face from a carafe of water on the table, and called frantically upon her, by a host of endearing names, to arouse herself for his sake and the sake of their children.

His exertions were at length crowned with success. A faint flush began to colour the marble whiteness of cheek and lip. The chest began to heave gaspingly, and the mouth to tremble. And then consciousness, with its attendant anguish, rolled in one full tide over the soul of the bereaved mother.

She started up, and looked around her wildly, crying:

"Oh, Geoffrey! he knows all! Where is he? Did you call him back? Did you make terms for the restoration of our child?"

"No, Beatrice," said her husband, with strange calmness—the calmness of despair. "He is gone. His last words were to threaten us all with ruin—you, and me, and our innocent Giralda."

"Oh, heaven!" wailed the Lady Beatrice. "Geoffrey, what can we do? I am almost wild! This is a grief bitterer than death."

"Do not despair utterly, Beatrice," said Geoffrey Trevalyan, rousing himself. "I will get someone on Adlowe's track, and trace him to the presence of our darling. Courage, Beatrice—"

"Courage, when Adlowe has gone even now for officers to arrest you. Yes, I have need of courage. Ah, what is that?"

She started abruptly as she heard a low, persistent knocking at the door, and vehement entreaties to be let in.

"It's Meggy," said Trevalyan, starting as if he also heard it for the first time. "She's been knocking this long time, but I had forgotten her, poor creature."

He went slowly to the door and opened it. The coachman and Meggy were outside, fearfully excited, and both crying.

"Come in, Meggy," said her master, quietly. "It's all right, my man. Keep watch at the gate. You had better put up the bar!"

The coachman hastened to execute the order, his fears quelled by his master's manner. The keener Meggy knew that the quiet was that of despair, and went in to her mistress a prey to the wildest alarm.

"Pack up a portmanteau at once, Meggy," said her ladyship. "We must be off before Lord Adlowe can return with officers. It's all out, Meggy—all!"

"Oh, my lady!" cried Meggy, shocked at having her suspicions thus confirmed, her voice breaking into sobs. "I tried to keep him out, my lady. It's fate! It's fate!"

"Where are the boys, Meggy?" asked the Lady Beatrice, looking around. "I sent them out after I saw his face. Send them to me."

Meggy hurried away to do the double bidding. Geoffrey Trevalyan walked the floor with hasty steps. The Lady Beatrice wrung her hands silently, her thoughts with her absent daughter.

Suddenly a quick, boyish tread sounded in the hall, and then Herbert entered the drawing-room, his face full of curiosity and concern.

"Meggy said you wished to see me, mamma," he said, approaching her. "Has that fellow gone whose face at the window scared you so? Was he a robber, or a madman, mamma?"

"I cannot answer your questions now, Herbert," replied the Lady Beatrice. "We are all going on a journey immediately. Where is Fay?"

"Is he not here?" asked Herbert, with a wondering glance around him. "When you sent us out, mamma, I went up stairs to papa's study to finish my drawing, and Fay went out into the garden to hunt for his ball which was lost to-day."

"Into the garden!" cried the Lady Beatrice, quick to take alarm. "Run and look for him, Herbert. Call him."

Herbert sprang out through the open window on his quest. He was absent several minutes, and returned at last, unsuccessful, saying that his brother was not to be found on the premises.

"Adlowe has carried him off!" shrieked the unhappy mother, her heart on fire. "Oh, my children! My poor lost children!"

A search was instantly instituted for Fay, the whole household, excepting Meggy, joining in it; but, as before, it was fruitless. The lovely boy had disappeared as completely as if the earth had swallowed him up.

"He has either strayed out into the street, having found the gate open, and will soon return," said the father, his anxiety now almost uncontrollable, "or our enemy has seized him as another hostage!"

He opened the gate and looked up and down the street. No sign of the missing boy was to be seen. No one was in the street at that moment. He called loudly the name of his son, and listened with his whole soul for some response. The only sound that came to his hearing was that caused by a swiftly approaching cab, not yet in sight.

With a heavy heart and lagging steps he returned to the presence of the Lady Beatrice, who was almost wild.

"Have you found him?" she asked, springing to meet him. "Have you brought me back my boy? Oh, Geoffrey! he is not with you! He is lost—lost!"

"My poor Beatrice!" said Trevalyan, gathering her to his breast. "I have sent the man over to the station, to see if Fay is there with Adlowe. Be comforted. He will not dare harm the boy!"

At this moment the bell of the garden gate rang loudly and furiously.

"It is Fay returned!" ejaculated Geoffrey Trevalyan.

"It is the officers come to arrest you, Geoffrey," said the Lady Beatrice. "All our troubles have come at once. Fate is doing its worst now."

She sat down in dumb despair, clinging to him as if she meant that death alone should part them.

The ringing was heard again, louder and more furious.

Meggy came down from the upper rooms, frightened and anxious, her packing finished. Her master sent her to answer the bell, the Lady Beatrice clinging to him wildly, at the same time urging him to fly.

The two waited a few moments in an eager expectant attitude, and then, as the garden gate clanged shut, a wild hope that their boy had returned illumined their souls.

"It must be that Fay has returned," said the Lady Beatrice, in an eager whisper. "Meggy would not admit anyone save a friend."

They waited with growing hope. Meggy's step was heard on the porch, and then a quick, springing, manly tread, at sound of which the waiting pair

shivered with sudden dread. It was not the step of their missing boy. It must then be, they thought, the step of an enemy.

Geoffrey Trevalyan—we shall henceforth call him by his true name—placed himself in an attitude of self-defence. The Lady Beatrice started up with the wild resolve to shield him with her body. They stood thus when Meggy ushered a stranger into their presence—the young Lord Grosvenor!

It was to be seen at a glance that he was no enemy. His noble face invited trust in him. His hazel eyes glowed with friendly feeling, and his manner was at once gentle and reassuring.

He seemed to comprehend at once the state of affairs.

"I have the honour of seeing the Lady Beatrice and Senor Arevalo?" he questioned, bowing to the unhappy couple, who seemed transfixed at the sight of him.

"Lord Grosvenor!" ejaculated the Lady Beatrice, recognising him. "You here?"

She looked at him in wild amazement.

"Yes, dear Lady Beatrice, it is I, Paul Grosvenor, your friend," said the young lord, gently. "Do not distress yourself. I know all—"

"You know all?" interrupted the Lady Beatrice.

"I know," said the young lord, with an expression of tender and reverential respect, "that you, dear Lady Beatrice, are a honoured wife and mother in secret, while the world believes you single. I know that Senor Arevalo, your husband, is the wronged and maltreated Geoffrey Trevalyan, upon whose name is a frightful stain, to clear away which I have vowed to devote all my energies."

He held out his hand with a winning smile, and Geoffrey Trevalyan took it in his bewilderment, grasping it firmly.

"I know also, dear Lady Beatrice," said the young visitor, "that Lord Adlowe has just been here with threats—perhaps with some story concerning your daughter—"

"Yes, yes," cried the Lady Beatrice, losing her amazement at this visit in her mother's anguish. "My poor Giralda, a prisoner in his hands!"

"I come here at her request," said the young lord, "to assure you of her safety. I left her this morning under her uncle's roof, in her uncle's care. Lord Adlowe does not yet know of the defeat of his villainous plans."

"She is safe! My darling is safe!" exclaimed the Lady Beatrice, the tears drenching her burning eyes like a hot shower. "You have seen her, Paul? She told you about us?"

"Yes, Lady Beatrice. Lord Adlowe had carried her to the lonely cottage of his old nurse. It was close to the sea, and only two miles or so from my Welsh place, the Eagle's Eyrie. I happened to be sailing along the coast. Giralda saw me, and beckoned to me. I had seen her before, and recognised her. I rescued her, and restored her to her uncle."

"Heaven bless you, Paul!" murmured the Lady Beatrice, taking his hand. "And then Giralda told you her story?"

"She confided all to me, relying on my honour to keep her secret, Lady Beatrice," said the young lord. "The journey was too long for her after her great excitement and fatigue. Dear Lady Beatrice, dear Mr. Trevalyan, I come in Giralda's stead. Let me be to you a younger brother—a son!" and he flushed consciously, even to his brows. "To clear the stain from Mr. Trevalyan's name shall be my first object and aim in life. Let me help you in this great strait!"

"But why?" asked Geoffrey Trevalyan, searching keenly the handsome young face. "What has given you this strange interest in one whom even his own uncle believes base and crime-stained? Why do you believe in my innocence? What object have you in my restoration to my rights?"

The young Lord Grosvenor flushed again, more redly than before. His eyes flooded with a sudden radiance, and he turned them upon the Lady Beatrice with an appealing glance.

"I—I love Giralda," he said simply, with a strange humility, as if he were expressing his aspiration for a star. "And Giralda loves me," he added, with a glad smile, and a happy thrill pulsing through his voice, as if he were announcing an incredible fact. "You have known me all my life, dear Lady Beatrice. This is no time to talk to you of my hopes and wishes, but if you will only let me assist you now, I shall know that you don't mean to separate Giralda and me."

He spoke eagerly and pleadingly.

"This is no time to talk of love," said the Lady

Beatrice, beginning to recover from her surprise, and to understand the matter fully. "But, my dear boy," she added, "you shall help us. Heaven knows we need your help! You shall befriend us in Giralda's name, and for Giralda's sake."

The face of the young lord glowed with a joyous hope. His eyes were fairly radiant. He lifted her ladyship's hand to his lips, and sought in Mr. Trevalyan's eyes encouragement similar to that accorded so delicately and graciously by the Lady Beatrice.

"Yes, my lord," said Giralda's father, with mournful emphasis. "Yes, Paul, we need the assistance of a clear head and loving heart. Your face assures us that we can trust you. The Lady Beatrice has accepted your help. Whom she trusts I also trust."

From that moment Lord Grosvenor loved Geoffrey Trevalyan for himself, as well as because of Giralda, and believed in his entire innocence of all wrongful intentions, in the past or present, with all the ardour of his young soul.

"The first thing to be done," said Paul, after he had time to command his emotions, "is to leave the Laurels at once. Adlowe may return at any moment with policemen to arrest you."

"We are ready to go," responded Mr. Trevaldan, his face clouding: "but where are we to go?"

"I have thought of that. I have three or four places about the country. In one of them you would be as safe as in a foreign land. I will give you a letter to the person in charge—in fact," he added, "I have one all ready with me. The Lady Beatrice had better return to town, to watch Adlowe and your interests in that quarter."

This plan commended itself by its practicability and common-sense.

"But my boy—my Fay!" exclaimed the Lady Beatrice, recalled to her grief by the sound of Herbert's step in the hall.

"Fay?" questioned the young lord, as Herbert entered the room.

"This is our elder son, Herbert," explained Mr. Trevalyan. "Our younger boy was in the garden when Adlowe went away. He has been missing since. We think that Adlowe carried him off."

"I know it!" cried the mother, in anguish. "My boy never grieved me in his life. He would not do so now by straying away. Oh, no! He is a prisoner in Adlowe's hands."

"I think it quite probable," said Lord Grosvenor, thoughtfully. "But you may rest assured that he will not harm the lad. He wants to keep him, that he may make terms with you—perhaps to force you to consent to his marriage with Giralda."

"You do not think," said the Lady Beatrice, in a hollow whisper, "that he means to—to remove him as an obstacle to his succession to the Trevalyan estates. My boys removed—Geoffrey got rid of—Giralda a prisoner, as he thinks—his way would be clear."

The suggestion struck a chill to Grosvenor's heart. He thought it possible that such thoughts might have occurred to the bold and unscrupulous man who had so long deemed himself heir of the Trevalyan estates.

"Dear Lady Beatrice," he said, reassuringly, "people don't dare form such sweeping schemes of wickedness in these days of law and swift-following punishments. Believe me, Adlowe has taken the boy as a hostage. Believe me, also, that I will place him in your arms before to-morrow night! But now, let us think of your husband. Although Adlowe may not intend to descend upon him at once, he had better depart while he may."

"Yes, yes!" faltered the tortured wife and mother.

"There may be a spy at the station. Do not go by the train. Have you a carriage?"

"Yes, a pony carriage," said Mr. Geoffrey Trevalyan.

"Then go in that to some other station on the line. Here is the letter I spoke of, and on it is the address to which you are going. Take Herbert with you, and let the Lady Beatrice remain here until morning. I will escort her ladyship back to town."

The young lord turned towards Herbert, and was startled at the anxious look on the lad's face. It was clear that the high-spirited boy was puzzled and tortured by the mystery all around him—by his parents' grief, by the loss of his young brother, by the talk of a hurried flight, and the necessity of concealment in some secluded place.

"Dear Mr. Trevalyan," said Paul, gently; "make Herbert your confidant to-night. You will find in him an intelligent friend. And now" he added, with a cheerful smile, "I will see if the coachman has not returned, and if the carriage cannot soon be got ready."

He went out, leaving the husband and wife and son together to linger over their sad parting.

The coachman had not yet returned from the station. Meggy, however, lighted a lantern and led the young visitor to the stable in the rear of the garden, where he harnessed the ponies himself.

The task completed, the portmanteau was placed in the carriage, and Lord Grosvenor slowly returned towards the dwelling.

He had not reached it when the coachman entered the garden by means of his pass-key, and the young lord stopped to question him of what he had learned.

"I've tracked 'em, my lord," said the man, in answer to Grosvenor's inquiries, when Meggy had explained who the visitor was. "Lord Adlowe took the early train to town, and had just left when I arrived at the station. He had a fair-haired little lad with him, as he told a guard was his 'fractory son.' There wa'n't no time to say anything, as his lordship had barely got his tickets when the train came along. The lad was Master Fay, fast enough, my lord."

"Come in and give your report to the Lady Beatrice and Senor Arevalo," said Grosvenor. The coachman followed the visitor into the dwelling, and communicated his discovery.

"My poor boy!" moaned the Lady Beatrice. "Was he in great distress? Was he frightened?"

"I asked the guard, my lady," replied the coachman, "and he said as how the little fellow doubled up his fists at his father as he sposed Lord Adlowe was, and how he called for help, he thought, but he couldn't be certain on account of the screech of the engine."

"My brave boy!" murmured the mother, beginning to recover her courage and strength. "He may attract attention and friends. It will not do to telegraph to have Adlowe stopped. We have too much at stake to hazard anything. My first duty is to my husband. I must not detain you longer, Geoffrey. You must go. I have taken down the address of your hiding-place, and will let you know all the news concerning Fay."

Geoffrey Trevalyan held his wife close to his side, and turned his anguished face towards Grosvenor.

"My lord," he said, in a broken voice, "you see how I am situated. I cannot stir a finger to rescue my missing boy. I cannot even linger to console my poor wife. You have a good face—a feeling heart! You love Giralda! By that love, my lord, I beg you to take the place I should take towards my loved ones. Do what I should do if I were only free. Find my boy and restore him to his mother. Watch over my wife and Giralda! Do I ask too much?"

"Mr. Trevalyan," responded Lord Grosvenor, solemnly; "I will devote myself to your service. From this moment your interests shall be my own. The Lady Beatrice and her children shall be my dearest, chiefest care. I will die, if need be, in their defence. I will know neither peace nor perfect rest until you and yours are happy."

He spoke like one making a vow. His eyes, his face, his whole being attested to his stern and unchangeable resolve. He looked to those storm-tossed souls like an angel of hope.

"We trust you!" said Mr. Trevalyan, his tones tremulous. "I confide my dear ones to your care."

The Lady Beatrice echoed the words. She had known the young Lord Grosvenor since his boyhood, and known him as the soul of chivalric honour, truth, and generosity. She knew him to be one of those grandly noble souls peculiar to no rank or nation, found among the lofty and the lowly, among savages and civilised people, yet withal as rare as black diamonds, or the flowers of the century-blossoming aloe.

Knowing him, she trusted him. If aught could have assuaged her wifely and motherly anguish in that hour of supreme misery, it was the thought that this gallant young man was ready to fight for her loved ones, that this gallant young heart was ready to bleed for her.

"And now," she said, when her eyes and her voice had expressed her gratitude to the young lord for his timely aid, "Geoffrey, you must go. Take another name—that of Melville. It is simple, and a complete change from Arevalo. Do not trust Herbert out of your sight. And now," she concluded, "farewell!"

A few last words—a last fervent embrace—and Geoffrey Trevalyan and Herbert tore themselves away from the clasp of Lady Beatrice, and hurried out to the waiting carriage. Lord Grosvenor followed them to promise anew devotion to the

wronged man's cause, and to open the carriage gate for their egress. And the two, father and son, drove slowly out from that lovely paradise, their griefs heavy on their souls, and turned away from the hidden home, and the door shut with a heavy clang.

(To be continued.)

## FACETIÆ.

JONES, who has just had his pocket picked, says his purse is a loss he ne'er will see a gain.—*Judy*.

MR. A. W. KINGLAKE is going to write the Bridge-water Treatise for this year. The subject will be "Purity of Election."—*Tomahawk*.

"TENURE for life" is the cry in Ireland now of the tenant farmers. The landlords also desire a life-tenure—which is not determinable by the assassin.—*Tomahawk*.

FROM THE BAR.—The publicans complain that the consumption of light wines has so alarmingly increased that they fail to recognise their once-beloved October in the Hock-topper of the period.—*Judy*.

A CASE OF PICKLES.—Ignorance in the eye of the law is no excuse for crime. We observe that many shopkeepers ticket up, "This Season's Jams" at "per jar"—are they aware of the serious consequences that might follow an indictment for per-jar-y?—*Fun*.

MEMBERS OF A LEARNED SOCIETY ON AN EXCURSION. Learned gentleman: "We are now near the remains of a Roman wall, and on examining the ground last year, it was found to be—"

Appreciative Native cuts in: "Barley sir, and beans the year afore."—*Punch*.

YOUNG Charlie Scapegrace says he prefers a performance with his dumb-bells to going into the society of those loud belles, who, when once they have had the "ring" given to them, wring your heart and your purse-strings too.—*Will-o'-the-Wisp*.

## SOMETHING IN THAT.

Jones visiting his friend Smith: "How very civil all these villagers are, they all touch their hats or hair to you. How the dooce do you manage to get round 'em so?"

Smith: "Easy as lying, old boy—owe each of 'em a little bill."—*Fun*.

AN ULTRA-HUMAN IDEA.—As the wise suggestion season as yet some time to run, a question of which the discussion will perhaps be pursued is, whether it is not cruel to open living oysters, and whether they could not be previously steeped in some anæsthetic, which would not render them unpalatable or injurious, and so make them disagree with those partaking of them, as they would if they were eaten with chloroform.—*Punch*.

## AN HONEST POLITICIAN.

Showman: "There, my little man, you now behold a grand triumph of art. Directly in the centre of the group you will perceive the portraits of our revolutionary fathers. Upon the right of the picture you will discover the names of those heroes who have distinguished themselves during the present rebellion, and also an honest politician."

Boy (with anxiety): "Which is the politician?" Showman: "You must look over the left for him. You'll find him there!"

## EPI-PHOTO-GRAM.

Lord Byron's face and Mrs. Stowe's.

Shop windows now display.

And prove there are more ways than one To make a scandal pay.

The former face is fair to see,

The latter not the least:

Together they suggest the tale Of Beauty and the Beast.

*Fun*.

A LAWYER riding through the town of Worcester, stopped at a cottage to inquire his way. The lady of the house told him he must keep on straight for some time, then turn to the right; but said that she herself was going to pass the road that he must take, and if he could wait a few moments till she could get her horse ready, she would show him the way. "Well," said he, "bad company is better than none—make haste." After jogging on five or six miles, the gentleman asked if he had not come to the road he must take. "Oh, yes," said she, "We have passed it two or three miles back; but I thought bad company was better than none, so I kept you along with me."

SHAPE OF THE EARTH.—A country schoolmaster one day announced to his pupils that the examination would soon take place. "If you are examined in geography," he said, "you will surely be asked what shape the world is, and if you should not remember, just look at me, and I will show you my snuff-box, to remind you it is round." Unfortunately the schoolmaster had two snuff-boxes—a round one, which he carried on Sunday, and a square that he carried during the week. The fatal day



having arrived, the class in geography was duly called out, and the question asked: "What is the shape of the earth?" The first boy, appalled by the appearance of the examining committee, felt embarrassed, and glanced at the master, who at once pointed to his snuff-box. "Sir," boldly answered the boy, "it is round on Sunday and square all the rest of the week."

A SCOTCH FARMER.

Until a few years back, it was the custom in Perthshire for servants to call any cow or calf their master might purchase by the name of the town from which it came, or by the name or surname of its previous owner. The following is a good illustration of this practice.

A farmer once lived not far from St. Martin's. This worthy old gentleman bought a calf from an elderly neighbour named Storer, but before he reached home with his purchase the shades of evening had closed around him, and his family and domestic servants had retired to rest. Disdaining to disturb either family or servants he proceeded to the byre, and bound the calf with his own hands.

On entering the house, he informed his elder son of what he had done, and observed that he would see it in the morning. On the following morning the son went to the byre to see the calf, but was surprised to find that it was dead.

He immediately went to his father, and, with a sorrowful face, informed him that Jamie Storer was dead.

"Oh, never mind," said the sire; "Jamie was an oddish sort of a man; you couldn't look for anything else. In fact, I have thought he had gang awa' like the snuffing o' a candle. Never mind, never mind."

"Aye, but father," exclaimed the son, "it's Jamie Storer the calf that's dead."

"Jamie Storer the calf!" shouted the venerable sire; "that alters the case. Bring me my slippers."

The order was speedily obeyed. Together they reached the byre, only to find the sad tale verified. Poor Jamie had been rather slack-bound, and in his struggle to free himself, was choked. The old man left the byre, muttering to himself:

"Ah, weel! Ah, weel!—it's but waird's gear! It may be better the way it is; auld Jamie is a nice kind of fellow."

THE TORMENTS OF TIGHT-LACING.

"Dear Mr. Punch,

"Being a young lady, of course, you know I must dress in the fashion, and now that small waists have come in I am obliged to lace myself as tightly as I can, so as not to look ridiculous. My stays hurt me terribly at first, they are so bony. Even now it is as much as I can do to sit through dinner without fainting. But I mean to persevere, and hope in a few days to measure an inch less, though I sadly fear I never shall be able to wear a waist of sixteen inches and a half, which my modiste says is now considered fashionable. And I am terribly afraid that what the doctors say is true, for since my dresses were made tight I have felt wretchedly unwell and out of spirits. My head aches so, you can't think, and my cheeks are, oh, so pale, and getting actually yellow. Indeed, my sister tells me that I look a perfect fright, but then, you know, she's envious of my having a fine figure."

"But the worst is that I feel so cramped that I can hardly stir, and am really quite fatigued with the least possible exertion. I used to love a dance and was immensely fond of croquet. But I find with a pinched waist it's quite impossible to waltz, you get so out of breath and feel so sick and dizzy. And as for playing croquet, why, you can't hit a hard knock, or stoop to pick a ball up, and your dress is made so tight that you feel afraid of something cracking."

"Another of my miseries is that my maid has the impudence to follow the new fashion, and is getting quite unfit for work through her tight-lacing. When I tell her to run upstairs to fetch a pocket-handkerchief, she moves as slow as I do myself, and comes down panting so that she can hardly rasp an answer to my questions. Then she constantly is getting nasty stitches in her side, and while she stands to do my hair she often feels so faint I have to give her sal volatile. The chance is too that when I come home from a party, I find that she has gone to bed with a sick headache, leaving poor me to retire to rest without the least assistance. Of course, you know, I'm bound to give her my old dresses, and she says they'd be of no use if she hadn't got a waist as small as mine, and so this is her excuse for her imitative impudence."

"Of course it's very nice to be admired for one's good figure, and of course I'd rather die than dress out of the fashion. But stays are a great torture, and deprive one of a number of small comforts and enjoyments, not to mention one so vulgar as enjoying a nice dinner, which one has no room to swallow when one's squeezed to sixteen inches. I know our

great great grandmothers were tortured like ourselves but croquet wasn't known then, any more than waltzing. And as I dearly love all feminine athletic sports like these, I certainly do hope the fashion will soon change, and that one may wear one's waist as wide as nature made it."

"Until then, believe me, yours, in misery,  
"A VICTIM."

THE TRYSTING TREE.

We stood beneath the trysting tree  
One summer evening long ago;  
The leaves were rustling drowsily,  
The air was still, the sun was low.

The songsters in the wood were dumb,  
No sound came from the breezy down;  
But faint and deep, a ceaseless hum  
Rose upward from the crowded town.

Her hand I held within mine own,  
I saw her bosom fall and rise;  
While lovingly upon me shone  
The sunshine splendour of her eyes.

And standing in the twilight there  
I carved her name upon the tree,  
She loosed the night of her long hair,  
And gave a silken tress to me.

I hid the token in my breast,  
My heart leaped up with sudden joy,  
And in wild words my tongue confessed  
The first love-passion of a boy.

Ah me, the deep tumultuous bliss,  
That thrilled my bosom when I felt  
Her stooping down to print a kiss  
Upon my forehead as I knelt!

And then I vowed though her dear name  
Might fade from off the gnarled tree,  
My love would still remain the same,  
And I would never faithless be.

So home we sauntered, while the night  
Hung all its star lamps out on high,  
And the moon flamed with tremulous light  
A silver pathway to the sky.

But often when the leafy wood  
Was wrapt in shadowy gloom, I came  
To see the place where she had stood,  
And kiss the letters of her name.

Her love I cherished in my soul  
And deem'd that it would ever bloom  
In life, and through the years that roll  
Their endless course beyond the tomb!

But, oh, the world is full of change!  
And boyhood's days glide swiftly by;  
Our early loves grow cold and strange,  
And all youth's bright enchantments fly!

The other day again I stood  
Where pass'd my boyhood wild and free;  
I left the town, and sought the wood,  
And found the well-remembered tree.

All seem'd the same—the woods were dumb,  
No sound came from the breezy down,  
But, faint and deep, a drowsy hum  
Rose upward from the crowded town.

And standing there I thought, "Ah me!  
How soon from youth's fond joys we part!"  
The name was blotted from the tree,  
The love had withered from my heart.

W. LEIGHTON.

STATISTICS.

STATISTICS OF THE VOLUNTEER FORCE.—The Hon. Captain Vivian, member for Truro, a few days since distributed the prizes gained by the 12th Cornwall (Truro) Rifles, at their recent competition. Captain Vivian, in the course of his address, held that Mr. Cardwell, the Secretary of State for War, was fully justified in his refusal to increase the capitation grant. The honourable gentleman quoted some statistics on the state of the forces. The estimates for the year 1869-70 amounted to 414,000*l*. The capitation grant, given only to efficient volunteers, last year was 228,050*l*, but in the present financial year it was 254,180*l*, showing an increase of 26,130*l*, and to that extent an increase in the number of efficient volunteers. And he was glad to find that this increase had taken place in every branch of the volunteer service. In the artillery the numbers had increased from 30,084 to 33,689 and the capitation grant from 45,128*l* to 50,539*l*; in the horse, engineers and rifle volunteers an increase in numbers from 124,605 to 136,659, and in the capitation grant from 123,867*l* to 136,859*l*. Then as to the extra efficient volunteers—those who were called "thirty-shilling men"—there had been an increase in numbers from

90,567 to 102,460, and in the amount of grant from 44,966*l* to 51,230*l*. With these figures before him, he thought the Secretary for War was perfectly right in refusing that increase of the capitation grant which was applied for in the spring.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

A GERMAN scientific journal announces laundresses to use hyposulphite of soda in place of common washing soda. It does not attack the fabric in any way, and at the same time exerts some bleaching action, which greatly improves the appearance of linen and calicoes.

TOMATOES.

At this season of the year there is generally an extremely good supply of these delicious culinary fruits, and although there are no end of ways of cooking them or making into sauce, I have never met with anything as a relish to equal what we call at home "Tomato Chutney." We use it with meat of all kinds, mutton cutlets, &c., and even "the baby" kicks up a dust if he does not come in for a share. Take 4*lb*. tomatoes, 2*lb*. onions, 1*lb*. apples, 1*oz*. of each of the following: Salt, long pepper, allspice, chilli capsicums, one pint vinegar, and half-a-teaspoonful of bole ammoniac for colouring. Boil it two hours and beat the whole through a colander. When cold put into small bottles and cork very tightly, the corks are best sealed over to exclude air, and place away in a cool closet. It is fit, for use directly it is made. E. A. C.

TO PICKLE CABBAGE.—(The finest colour ever produced without dyes.) Slice and sprinkle with salt. To lay two days. Drain and rub dry in a cloth, put into a jar, and to every quart of vinegar add 1*oz*. whole pepper, 1*oz*. whole ginger, 20 cloves, 20 allspice, one shell mace. Cayenne pepper to taste, 1*oz*. tartaric acid. Put the whole, with the vinegar cold, into the jar, tie up close, and stand the jar in a saucepan of water, or in an oven till of a scalding heat, but not to boil. When cold the pickle will be ready for use. If the cabbage is not a true colour, the white parts had better be cut out. This is warranted to be the best receipt ever before the public.

DR. DANIEL'S RECEIPT FOR MAKING INK.—For anyone who wishes to make his own writing-ink, we do not know an easier or better method than that adopted by the late Professor Daniell of King's College. He put into a stone-ware jar 1 gallon of soft water, 1*lb*. of bruised nut-galls, and next day 6*oz*. of green vitriol, 6*oz*. of gum arabic, and 4 or 5 drops of creosote. The bottle was then corked, and left in a corner of the room for two or three weeks, so that, once in two days or so, it might remind the owner that it wanted a good shaking. After this, it was left a few days, and then the clear liquor was decanted off for use. This formed a very black, a very cheap, and what is more, a very durable ink.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A JOURNEYMAN engineer named Goddard travelled recently on a bicycle of his own make from London to Newbury, in Berkshire (a distance of about sixty miles), in ten hours.

A FISHING smack has just arrived at Dieppe with five hogsheds of wine pick'd up at sea.

THE Salary of the Bishop of Carlisle is not as has been stated 9,500*l* but 4,500*l* or 5,000*l*.

DURING the past legal year there has been considerable depression in legal business, owing partly to the operation of recent legislation, and partly to the commercial ruin which generally prevailed. We understand that matters are now looking up, and that an improvement may be looked for in the ensuing term.

THE OLD TEMPLE PIER.—The last of the old ramshackle constructions of this kind on the Thames has this year disappeared. Only the Thames steamboats now remain as representative of a bygone age, and we hope some day to chronicle their demise, and the incoming of their successors with something decent about them besides their engines.

A NEW system of strategic house robbery has come into fashion in South London. The lady of the house is tempted out by a *ruse* to visit a neighbour's residence, when the robber enters her abode, and if confronted by the servant or any other person left in the house, feigns to be intoxicated, and then suddenly makes his escape. If no inmates are found, the plundering is rapidly proceeded with.

NAVAL SCHOOL IN FRANCE.—It is said that the French Government is about to establish a great central school in Paris for the instruction of youths intended for the naval and mercantile marine. The education will not only include navigation and all connected with it, but the pupils will also receive a thorough commercial education, so as to r-nder them fit for employment in any part of the world.

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## NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

ALPHA.—In France, all persons seventy years of age and upwards are exempted from arrest for debt.

ROSS J.—We are not acquainted with the address you require.

WILLIAM CARLISLE.—The poetry is too "original" for our columns.

LIZZIE wishes to inform L. Harwitz that she has returned to her friends; and wants to hear from L. H.

HANMOR.—1. Her Majesty's regiment of Life Guards would probably suit you. 2. Order the book through a bookseller in your neighbourhood.

A POOR MAN.—Dampness in a house, if concealed at the time of letting, is sufficient excuse for quitting it abruptly and breaking the agreement.

S. ROBINSON.—Your lines are marked by great crudeness; now and then the repetitions are ludicrous. Perhaps you may have a joint notion of versification, and yet your taste is at fault to send us such a specimen.

DIE HARD.—You are liable to be summoned in the County Court for your share of the ten weeks maintenance. From the solicitor you can recover nothing, since you have already received his advice in return for the fees.

PHILIP.—1. It is possible your height may increase. 2. You can do nothing beyond taking care of your health, and avoiding all bad habits. 3. The writing is very good. A plainer hand is used in lawyer's offices.

A. CROW.—If you have already received instruction, apply to the lady or gentleman of whom you took lessons. If you have not taken lessons, it is essential for your advancement that you should become the pupil of some competent instructor.

HAROLD EYES.—You are correct; both words signify the same thing; the first is a Latin word, the other a French word. We are sorry that we cannot help you to the name of the song, but we are unacquainted with the lines you have transcribed for our perusal.

AGNES.—We understand that Miss Rye is now on her way to Canada, and that, as a rule, there are no free passages to that colony. New Zealand is farther away from home than Canada, but it is more like England and possesses a milder climate.

J. HASLAM.—Keeping your hat on in a school-room appropriated for the evening to dancing, was extremely rude. You should have left the room, if the draught annoyed you. An attention to these little civilities shows the true gentleman.

H. T. A.—To make a good red sealing-wax, take one pound of yellow resin, five ounces and a half of gum lac, five ounces and a half of Venice turpentine, and one ounce of vermilion. Dissolve the resin, lac, and turpentine first, and then stir in the vermilion.

LAURESTINE.—Conquer your passion. We do not think such an union would be productive of lasting felicity. The disparity in age, the nearness of the relationship, and the apparent silliness of the young man, all militate against the idea.

YOUNG CURIOUS.—Leather may be dyed red by washing the skins and laying them two hours in galls, then wringing them out, and dipping them in a liquor made with privet berries, alum, and verdigris, in water; and, lastly, in a dye made of Brazilian wood, boiled with ley.

J. E.—After marriage you must obey your husband; so that should he desire you to give up your Sunday-school teaching, why you must do so. When married, you must bear in mind that your home duties and obligations are of paramount importance. A wife cannot be too much at home.

A SUBSCRIBER.—Very likely Dr. Carpenter's work would suit you. It is a complete introduction to the knowledge of plants. Its title is "Vegetable Physiology and Systematic Botany," and the new edition has been revised by the celebrated Dr. Lankester. Perhaps the bookseller with whom you deal can show you a copy. The price of the work is 6s.

R. W.—1. The trembling proceeds from a low state of health, or may be from some bad habit. Bracing air and exercise, together with early hours will prove beneficial. 2. Cold bathing is good as to its effects upon the skin, and never produces any thing of the nature to which you allude. 3. The mixture is a good remedy against baldness; there is, however, no certain cure.

IN EARNEST.—Bashfulness is more a weakness than a habit. It is chiefly caused by parents foolishly secluding their children from society, checking their natural gaiety, and endeavouring to impose on them an unnatural artificiality. As regards your case, we should advise you to become a member of a literary society, and so have an opportunity of meeting young men as fair in the usages and affairs of the world.

BEER.—What is called black-beer—which means spruce-beer—may be made as follows: Take seven pounds of treacle, and dissolve it in four gallons and a half of hot water. When the temperature has fallen to blood-heat, mix in about four ounces of the essence of spruce, and dissolve it perfectly by agitation; then add half-a-pint of good brewing yeast, and mix thoroughly. A fermentation will soon commence, and when it has perceptibly subsided the liquor must be drawn off, the cask well washed, and the liquor returned. A second, but slighter fermentation will then take place, and as it diminishes the liquor is fit for bottling.

P. L. (Birmingham).—The contradictions in the grammars of which you write are only upon minor matters, and should prove no stumbling-block in the way of students. It is true that grammarians now say that the parts of speech are eight only, and not nine as Lindley Murray wrote. But this is accounted for by placing "a," "an," and "the" amongst the "adjectives," and abolishing the class formerly called "articles." Other discrepancies are not much more formidable. Study more earnestly, and then you will find that such points will interest you. We consider that the grammar compiled by Dr. Morrell, one of her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, is the best grammar now in use.

EMILY puts an old-fashioned question to us. She wants to know which would make the best husband, a fair or dark-complexioned man. We are not aware that the shade or quality of the hair on the head, or the tinge of the skin, make any difference in a man. If fair men made bad husbands, there would be few good husbands in this country—for the majority of Englishmen are fair. It is one of the boasts of the race. All dark men have southern blood in their veins; and it has been remarked that the population of these islands is getting darker with every fresh generation. This has been caused by intermarriages with the people of France, Spain, Portugal, and Germany. But the colour of the man does not determine his goodness.

## THIS WORLD IS NOT A WILDERNESS.

This world is not a wilderness.

Nor life all gloom and sorrow;

If we each day would do the best,

And trust not till to-morrow,

This life and earth would be transformed

To sunny bowers of beauty;

If Love and Justice were reformed,

And man would do his duty.

Then let us do our duty,

It leads to bliss and beauty;

For the glory and the pride of man

Is still to do his duty.

Man makes himself his greatest foe,

And thro' grim hate and scorn;

Our lives are desert-wastes of woe,

Where Love had all adorning.

How happy might life glide along

If we would love each other;

The weak be aided by the strong,

For every man a brother.

Then let us do our duty,

It leads to bliss and beauty;

For the glory and the pride of man

Is still to do his duty.

JOSEPH ROY.

WHITEHAVEN.—To make cider, the apples are ground to a pulp in a mill, and afterwards put into coarse, strong bags, and pressed with a great weight, so as to squeeze out of them all their juice. The juice is placed in large open tubs, and kept at a heat of about sixty degrees. When it has passed through the proper fermentation—which may be known by its appearing tolerably clear, and having a vinous sharpness on the tongue—the pure part of the liquor must be racked off into open vessels, and exposed for a day or two in a cool place. After this it must be put into casks and kept in a cool place during the winter. In the beginning of March the liquor will be bright and pure and fit for bottling, which should be done in fair weather.

MADELINE.—A gentleman (?) sent you the flower of the thorn-apple. What did he mean? He intended it either as a reproach or a rude insult. In the language of flowers the thorn-apple means deceit. It languishes during the day and avoids the sun. But on the approach of night the flowers revive, display their charms, and unfold their large bells—which nature has covered with purple, lined with ivory, and to which she has imparted an odour that attracts and intoxicates. It is a poisonous plant, and therefore dangerous to be allowed to grow where there are children. What flower shall you send him in return? A yellow pink, if you like—for that signifies disdain, contempt, scorn—on account of its being the least beautiful, the least fragrant of the pink tribe, and yet requires the most care. Or, if you wish to be very cross with him, you may send him a vine-leaf—for Anacharsis tells us that the vine tree produces three kinds of fruit—intoxication, debauchery, and repentance.

MARION.—Women have a strong appreciation of the powers that appeal to their inner nature, and consequently have better ideas than men of the value of temperance as controlling character. They even endeavour to reduce their dreamy coinages to a standard by indulging in such speculations as, whether a blonde should marry a dark man, and a brunette a fair man. They have discovered that temperance is the inevitable agent that quickens and changes the form and tone of character, and with the curiosity natural to their sex, would familiarise its secret workings to their outward sense by such visible tokens as the colour of the skin, the hair, the eyes, and the peculiar mannerisms. Having formed their beautiful ideal, they wish the man they would marry to approach it as nearly as possible. To the instincts is delegated the task of instituting the necessary inquiries and forming the deductions which are to enable the individual almost instantaneously to make such a comparison between the real and the ideal, as to render a preference or rejection a matter of little difficulty. Women, therefore, have a better chance of selecting good husbands than men have of securing good wives; and it is generally their own fault if they make a bad choice.

E. T. J.—The origin of the beautiful substance, amber, has been, and continues to be, the theme of much discussion. Under the name of electrum, it was well known to the ancients—being so called from its possessing, in a high degree, with the aid of friction, the property of attracting towards it any light substances. It has also been obtained in the greatest quantities on the shores of the Baltic, on digging a few feet into the soil, or after a storm, it is found in large quantities lying on the shore. We do not, however, hear of its being found inland, except at Fichtelauer, in Germany; the top stratum there is sand, underneath which lies a bed of clay; beneath that, again, there exist the remains of one of the mediæval forests, in a state bordering upon coal, but still retaining the distinct marks of the woody fibre. This stratum is generally found to rest upon a bed of pyrites overlying a bed of sand, on which the amber is found in great abundance. Many of the ancient writers suppose it was derived from the same source as the resins and gums, to which they conceive it to be allied; but this story has been over-ruled, in favour of the more obvious one, that it is a species of pure bitumen, which, it has been admitted, is produced from vegetables which have decayed under peculiar circumstances.

G. H.—Among the initiated in the mysteries of the language of flowers, the garden daisy expresses reciprocal attachment. When the mistress of a knight permitted him to have this flower engraven on his arms, it was a public avowal that she returned his love. The garden daisy is the double field-daisy. The latter is expressive of innocence. Oasian beautifully describes it as a flower "with golden disc, marked with rays of silver, tipped with a delicate tinge of crimson. Waving amid the grass in a gentle breeze it looks like a little child playing on the green meadow." The ancient English name of this flower was Day's Eye—in which way it was written by Ben Jonson; and Chaucer calls it the "ee of the daisy." Shakespeare apostrophises it as the flower, "Whose white vestments figure innocence."

As to your other question, we can only say that the custom of using flowers as symbols of the sentiments of the heart, is of an extremely old origin. It was introduced into this country by Wolsey Montague introduced a knowledge of the custom into this country; but in the ages of chivalry, colours were adopted by the knights—hence, red was highly esteemed as the colour of love, and, accordingly, the rose was, on account of its tint, a favourite emblem.

G. S. (a steward), 5 ft. 10 in., dark, and good looking. Respondent must be of medium height, and fair.

MARY ANNE, dark, medium height, good looking, and domesticated. Respondent must be dark, tall, and fond of home.

ALICE ANNE, tall, fair, and amiable. Respondent must be tall, dark, fond of home, and good tempered. A grocer preferred.

ANNA C., medium height, and very affectionate. Respondent must be very respectable, fond of home, and dark.

HATTIE (a widow), twenty-eight, 5 ft. 2 in., gray eyes, and stontish. Respondent to forward his cards de visite. A bandsman in a cavalry regiment preferred.

HAPPY JACK (a retired officer), 5 ft. 9 in., wishes to wed a lady with an income of 250l. a year; a widow not objected to, if without incumbrance.

ANNIE K., twenty-one, tall, dark, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall and fair. A policeman preferred.

SUSIE K., medium height, dark hair and eyes, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be dark and good looking. A mechanic preferred.

D. E. (a gentleman), twenty-one, 5 ft. 4 in., dark, with hazel eyes, and has a little money. Respondent must be nineteen, loving, of a good temper, and must be able to cook a comfortable meal.

LIZZIE H., twenty, tall, cheerful, domesticated, dark blue eyes, and affectionate. Respondent must be about twenty-one or twenty-three, and live in or near Birmingham; wishes to exchange cards.

SHIRAZ AND LOU.—"Shiraz," nineteen, tall, dark, good tempered, and fond of home. Respondent must be tall, fair, and affectionate. "Lou," twenty-two, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, and domesticated. Prefers a dark gentleman.

## COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

D. E. is responded to by "Agatha," twenty, dark, hazel gray eyes, dark brown hair, very affectionate, and fond of home.

HETTY by—"A. H.," 5 ft. 10 in., fair, and in easy circumstances. Wishes for Hetty's cards de visite.

BESSIE W. by—"Happy Bill," fond of home, dark, and good looking. Wishes for a communication and cards de visite.

FAITH by—"A. R.," of sound principles, fond of home, and a member of the Established Church. Wishes to receive "A. R.'s" cards de visite.

FANNY FRY by—"R. R.," twenty-two, and in business for himself, the profits of which exceed 200l. per annum. Wishes for cards de visite.

D. E. by—"M. A. W.," twenty, medium height, dark brown hair, dark blue eyes, fond of home, but without fortune.

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